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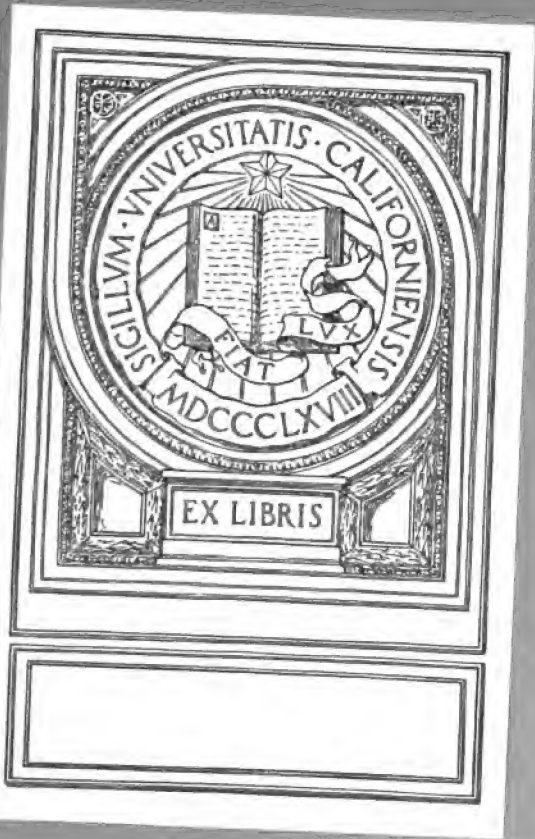
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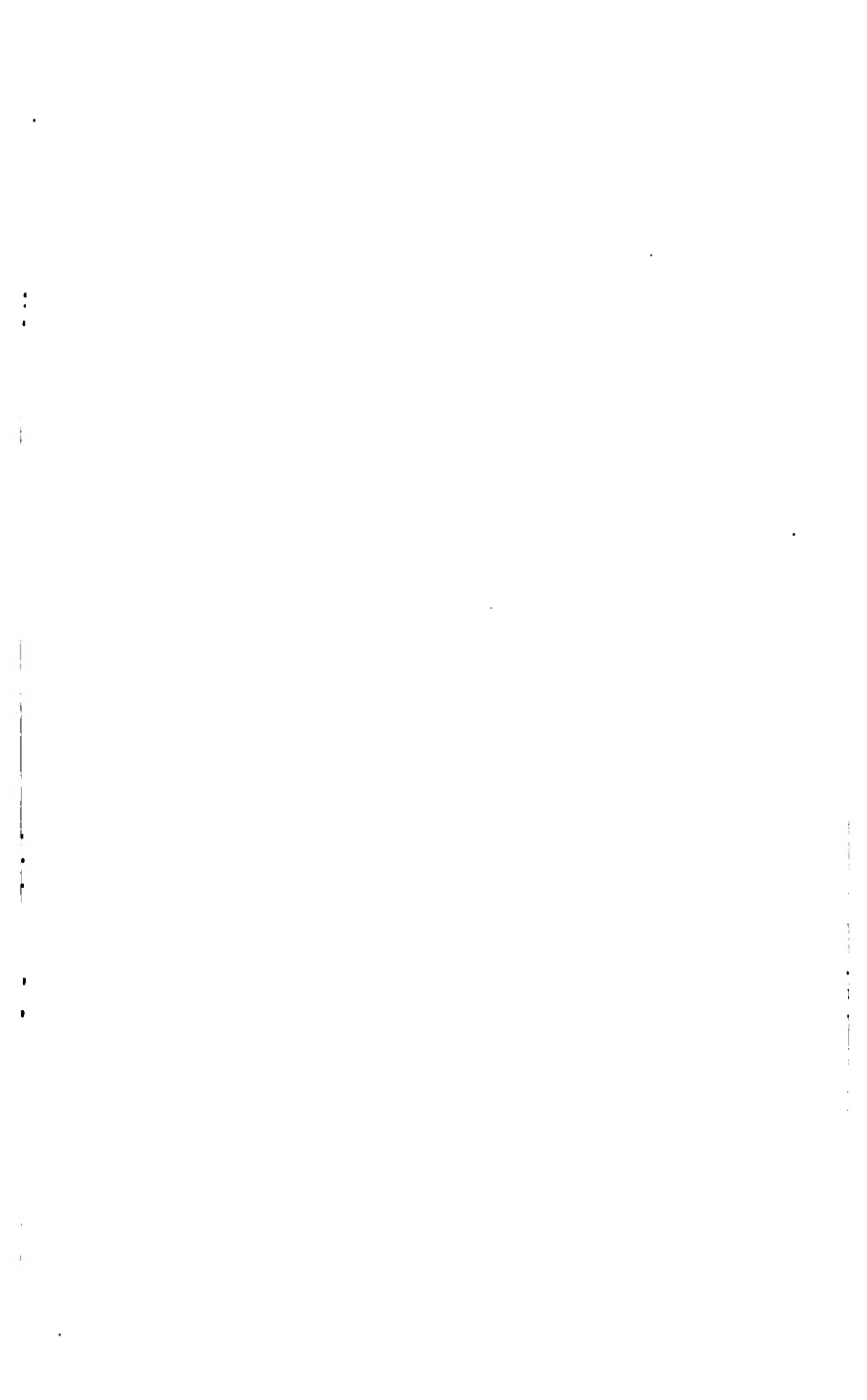


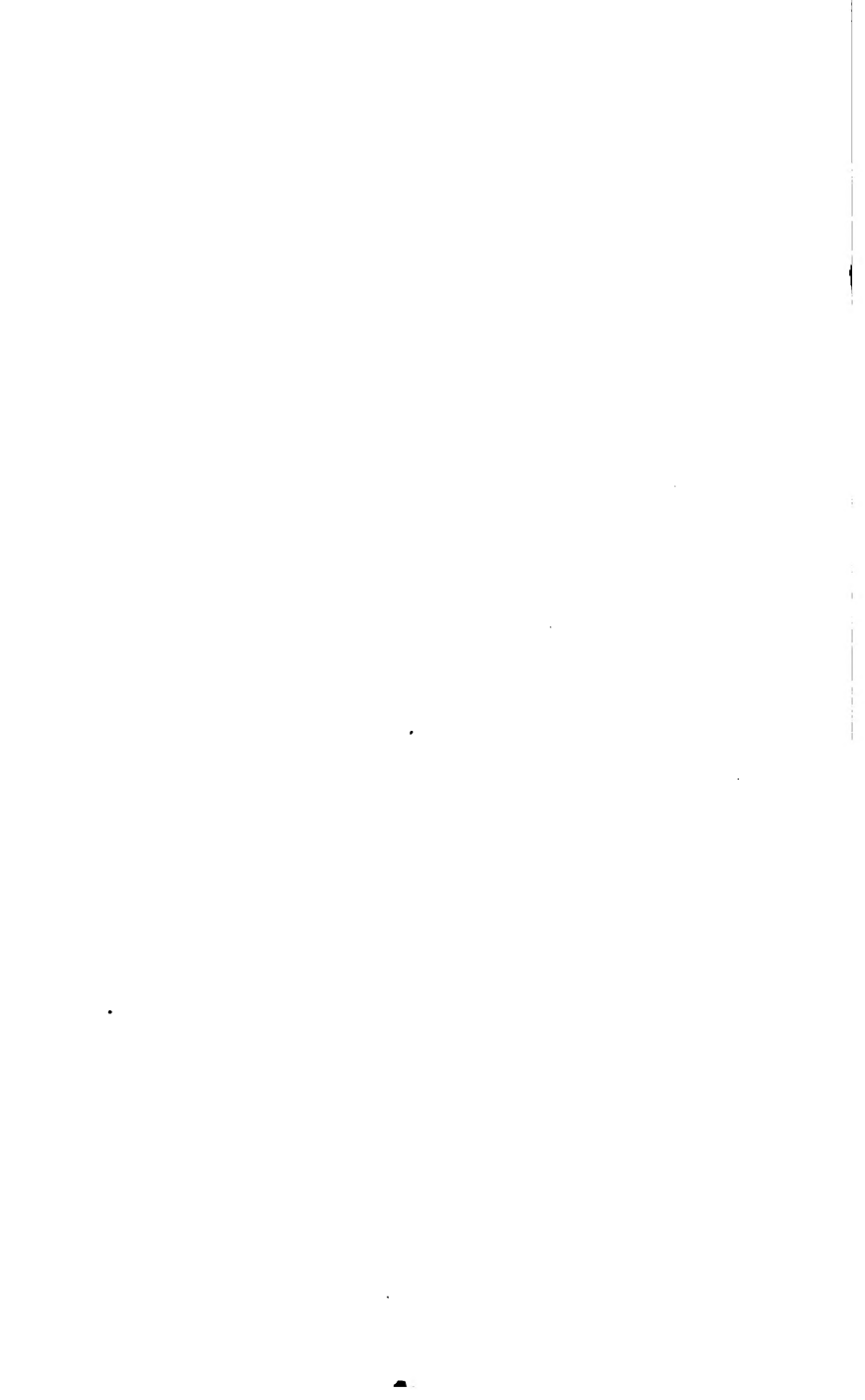












# A STUDY OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN POETS

A LABORATORY METHOD

BY

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*"Le Style c'est l'homme."*—BUFFON

"The whole art of criticism consists in learning to  
know the human being who is partially revealed to us  
in his written and spoken words."—LESLIE STEPHEN

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## PREFACE

THE kindly reception accorded to the author's "Study of English Prose Writers," published in 1898, seems to warrant the appearance of this complementary volume, which was foreshadowed in the preface to the "Prose Writers." As the method involved is somewhat distinctive, it seems wise to make some repetitions from that preface. A certain amount of repetition will be found, also, in the chapters on Milton, Lowell, and Holmes.

It is generally admitted by teachers of English that, after one has learned to avoid the common violations of clearness, force, precision, and the other requisites of good style, he may best improve his own use of the mother-tongue by studying the English classics. But how is one to *study* the English classics so as to obtain positive and appreciable results? This volume represents an attempt to answer that question so far as it applies to the poets concerned. Certainly, the question has not been answered satisfactorily by the numerous text-books on English literature, nor by the countless editions of English classics "with notes." To memorize biographical data or the generalities and negations of criticism, or to trace out obscure allusions or doubtful meanings, is certainly not to study a writer in any broad or fruitful way. While the method here offered may not be ideal, it is not merely theoretical. It has been rigidly and continuously tested in the author's class-room during the last twelve years by means of a partially developed manuscript, printed privately for the use of his own pupils, and again in his published volume on the "Prose Writers."

In a word, the method consists in determining the particu-



lar and distinctive features of a writer's style (using the term *style* in its widest sense), in sustaining this analysis by a very wide consensus of critical opinion, in illustrating the particular characteristics of each writer by carefully selected extracts from his works, and in then requiring the pupil to find, in the works of the writer, parallel illustrations.

The method grew out of dissatisfaction with results obtained under the old ways of teaching English and out of the conviction that such a revolution as has taken place in the manner of studying all branches of natural science during the last quarter-century is both possible and desirable in the study of English. Just as the pupil has learned to study oxygen and electricity and protoplasm, and not merely what someone has written *about* these, so he must learn to study the masterpieces of style themselves and not merely what someone has written about them. Moreover, as the student of chemistry, physics, or biology must have a hand-book or a set of tables to show him how to go to work, so the student of English classics must have a hand-book to show him how to go to work. This volume is offered as such a hand-book for the poets of generally accepted rank except Shakespeare.

It is a plausible objection to the method here presented that it is unscientific because it seems to apply the old scholastic dictum, "First learn what is to be believed," and because it follows a deductive rather than an inductive order. The reply is that the pupil must have some guidance, and that "every one knows more than any one." It is believed that the consensus of criticism here offered is sufficiently wide to annul any charge of mere individual preference. To ask an ordinary undergraduate to study an English classic without giving him some specific directions, is as fruitless as to ask him to fly. Moreover, it will be seen that the method here offered is really inductive and scientific; for the pupil is encouraged to discover, in any writer under consideration, any other distinctive characteristic for which he can find clear illustrations

besides those named in the analysis found in this book. After a class has had sufficient experience in following the method here presented, it may be wise and feasible to ask them to do independent critical work; but born critics are as rare as born chemists.

Among the results obtained from this method are an increase in the breadth, accuracy, and idiomatic character of the pupil's vocabulary; the development, in his style, of such graces as chaste imagery, suspense, point, smoothness, rhythm, and a greater predominance of the Anglo-Saxon element; the development of an intelligent critical habit; and last, but perhaps most important, the creation of a real hunger for the best literature and the initiation of the pupil into the real life and spirit of the great masters of style. The central idea of this volume is found in the quotation from Leslie Stephen given on the title-page: "The whole art of criticism consists in learning to know the human being who is partially revealed to us in his written and spoken words."

The biographical outline prefixed to the discussion of each writer is intended simply as a means of review, that the reader may get his historical bearings, so to speak, before beginning his critical work. Those who desire more minute biographies will find them in the encyclopædias and those best of all biographies, the published letters of the writers concerned. The biographies of the earlier writers here discussed are based on Leslie Stephen's invaluable "Dictionary of National Biography;" the later ones are based on a careful review of each writer's correspondence. The bibliographies also prefixed to the several discussions are the result of some research. No subject needs the services of the professional bibliographer more than criticism, yet hitherto it has been strangely and almost entirely neglected. In the nature of the case, the best criticism is not to be found in complete volumes nor even in complete chapters or paragraphs. It is scattered sparsely through a vast amount of biography and general comment,

and is often found in books whose titles give no hint of critical contents. It is believed that the bibliographies here given will be found both helpful and somewhat exhaustive. Every book listed has been conscientiously examined, besides a vast number of volumes and periodical articles whose titles seemed to promise possible criticism, but which were found to contain only biography or the generalities and negations of criticism. Only those books and articles are listed that contain positive and specific criticism. In general, the arrangement of the books in the bibliographies is somewhat in the order of their importance. An effort has been made to quote all the eminent critics who have written about the writers concerned. Both the critical comments and the illustrations found in the body of the chapters have been taken directly from the original sources.

While this volume is not intended for use without constant reference to the works of the writers treated, and while it is intended, primarily, as a text-book for advanced pupils in English, it is believed that it will be found not devoid of interest to the general reader, even if used without reference to companion volumes of literature.

In conclusion, the author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the various librarians mentioned in the preface to his "Study of English Prose Writers" and also to the members of his "seminary" in English at Northwestern University, who have given material aid in verifying the bibliographies and the quotations. The omission of Shakespeare from this volume is justified on the ground that a proper discussion of "the myriad-minded one" will require in itself, if not an entire volume, the larger part of one. It is the author's purpose to complete this series of "studies" by the addition of such a volume, for which the material is already in hand.

J. S. C.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY,  
EVANSTON, ILL., April, 1900.

## SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

WHILE the author does not assume to teach the teachers who may use this volume as a text-book, it is hoped that a detailed statement of the method of use found most fruitful in his own classes will not appear pedantic. In order to attain the ends enumerated in the preface, it has been his custom to assign beforehand to each member of a class a specific section (usually about forty pages) of some work of the particular writer to be studied at the time and to give the following *directions to pupils* :—

- ✓ 1. Read carefully the section assigned to you, and observe critically every word, neither very long nor obsolete, that impresses you as not found in the vocabularies of ordinary writers and speakers, especially such words as do not belong to your own habitual vocabulary. Select the best ten such words, and write them after the figure 1 in your class-report, which is to be left on the instructor's desk at the opening of the class-session.
- ✓ 2. Observe carefully every case of especial accuracy or delicacy in the use of words, and record the best five cases opposite the figure 2 in your class-report, giving enough of the context in every case to make the accuracy or delicacy apparent.
3. Observe every distinct idiom, and record, opposite the figure 3, your best five cases.
4. Observe every rhetorical figure, and index, opposite the figure 4, the page and line where each of the best five figures is to be found.
5. Index, opposite the figure 5, the best three cases of suspense (rhetorical period) to be found in your section.
6. Index, opposite the figure 6, the best three cases of point (epigram, antithesis, balance, etc.), if such be found.
7. Index, opposite the figure 7, the best three cases of smooth connection found. Observe especially the connection between paragraphs.

8. Index, opposite the figure 8, the best three cases of simplicity, if such be found. Define simplicity, for this purpose, as the use of easy, conversational words and constructions.

✓ 9. Name the writer's favorite metrical form or forms, giving both foot and verse.

10. Now determine, approximately, in the following manner, the percentage of Anglo-Saxon words employed by the given writer :

Add the whole number of words on any full page taken at random, and use the sum for the denominator of a fraction. Then add the words on that page that are *not* apparently derived from Latin or Greek, and use the sum for the numerator of your fraction ; now reduce the fraction to decimal terms, and the result will be the approximate one sought. Of course, the accuracy of the result thus obtained will depend on the pupil's knowledge of foreign languages, but the ordinary college student knows enough of Latin, at least, to make this exercise practicable and beneficial.

Now read carefully the analysis of the writer under consideration, to be found in this volume, until you shall have gained from the comments and illustrations a clear idea of each of his particular characteristics. Then review the section assigned you from the writer's works, find there the best three illustrations you can of each of the particular characteristics, and index in your class-report the best illustrations found for each point, numbering according to the numbers given in the text-book. If your section does not afford illustrations of all the particular characteristics, obtain these from any of the writer's other works available so far as you have time.

Finally, copy at the end of your class-report at least one hundred words consisting of the finest and brightest short passages and quotable expressions to be found in what you have read.

If an average of forty 12mo pages from any writer be assigned to every pupil, the ordinary college upper-classman will accomplish the work outlined above in about five hours of faithful application—that is, enough to entitle him to an ordinary credit of two, perhaps three, week-hours. The work may be divided and considered at two or more class-sessions, or the complete reports may be considered at one time and credit be given accordingly. The number of illustrations of each point in a writer required from each pupil is, of

course, arbitrary. The numbers suggested have been found practicable.

The recitation-hour is occupied in comparing the various pupils' reports, listening to several illustrations of each of the particular characteristics, emphasizing the best cases under the ten general characteristics, and in answering many questions incident to the discussion. It is the author's practice to consider the ten general characteristics at one recitation, calling for definitions of selected words under point 1, and commenting at length on the illustrations offered of accuracy and delicacy in meaning. A second recitation on each writer is then devoted to a discussion of the particular characteristics and to the quotations. Written exercises are also required, at intervals, in which every pupil is expected to make accurate use, in sentences of his own invention, of the rare words selected previously from the various writers. This method, as a whole, has never failed to stimulate interest.

One difficulty confronts the teacher who would have his pupils study the English classics by this or any other method; namely, the lack of proper material in duplicate. To use a scientific, that is to say, a laboratory method, one must have material corresponding in variety and duplication to that provided at each table in a chemical laboratory; but few school-boards are yet willing to give to the teacher of English equal facilities with his colleague in chemistry or biology. The use of the ordinary book of "selections" is a delusion and a snare. As well expect to get a fair idea of the Atlantic by examining a pint bottle of its water.

Three methods of meeting this exigency have been employed by the author; none fruitless, but of varying value. First, one may have every pupil obtain a cheap edition of some complete work of every writer to be studied during a given period, and may then assign the same in sections, duplicating according to the circumstances. The numerous cheap editions of detached works published within recent years make this plan feasible without unduly burdening the pupils by the expense. Many years' use of this method has proved its practicability. The only serious objection lies in the fact that often no single work of a writer gives a sufficiently broad view of his style. For example, characteristics of Goldsmith to be found plentifully in his plays and essays are not to be found in the "Vicar of Wakefield." Of course, the ideal



and the just way would be for the school to own the works required in sufficient duplicate and then to charge, if necessary, a small fee, as is done in the laboratories of natural science, for the use and wear of these materials.

The second method is to have each pupil own the complete works of some one writer to be studied, and then to rotate these books through the class. This method secures the broad view lacking in the first, but it is cumbrous, sometimes irritating, and it makes concentration of attention in the class-room impossible—since no two pupils may be studying the same writer at the same time.

The third, and by far the best method yet found, involves more preliminary work and expense than may, perhaps, be expected of every teacher. A set of books, numerous enough to accommodate his present and probable classes, has been made by the author by taking the complete works of each of the twenty writers here treated, in sufficient duplications to make an average of about forty pages for each pupil. These have been divided into sections, making the divisions at the beginnings of chapters, and then the various piles of twenty sections each have been rebound into strong, durable volumes. The result is a series of books, each different from the rest, numbered consecutively, and all together including the complete works of every writer to be studied. These books are owned by the teacher or by the school, and are leased to the pupil, under fixed conditions, for a fee sufficient to keep the books in repair. Thus the class, as a whole, have the widest view of the writer's style, and the objections to the first two methods are overcome. The first method is practicable everywhere, and is, on the whole, very satisfactory, especially with classes of moderate size. The second is hardly to be recommended; the third is almost ideal.

## CHAUCER, 1340(?)–1400.....

**Biographical Outline.**—Geoffrey Chaucer, born probably in 1340; father, John Chaucer, a well-to-do, respectable vintner living in Thames Street, London; of Chaucer's life until 1357 nothing is known; he acquires a liberal education, but where he studies is not known; in 1357 he appears as a page in the household of the Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III.; here he continues for about eight years, and sees much of the world; in 1359 he "bears arms," and takes part in an expedition into France, but no fighting is done; he is taken prisoner at Retiers in Brittany and is ransomed by the King of England; in 1366 he marries a lady in service upon the Queen, of the family of Roet, Christian name Philippa, but the marriage proves unhappy; one son, Thomas, is born to them; on June 20, 1367, Chaucer receives, "for good service," a pension from the King (amount unknown); he is called at this time a yeoman of the king's chamber; in 1369 he is campaigning again in France; from June to September, 1370, he is abroad in the King's service. The years 1359–72 constitute the first literary period of Chaucer's life; this period shows the influence of the French poets, and is first represented by "The Boke of the Duchesse," written in 1369; many spurious writings attributed to Chaucer are found in this period; in 1372, as a member of a public commission, he visits Genoa and Florence and meets Boccaccio; in 1373 he returns to England.

In April, 1374, he receives as a pension a daily pitcher of wine for life; this afterward is commuted to twenty marks; June 8, 1374, he is appointed comptroller of the customs

and subsidy of wools, skins, and tanned hides in the port of London; June 13th he receives from the Duke of Lancaster a grant of £10 a year for life; November 8, 1375, he obtains a grant of custody of the lands and person of Edmund Staplegate of Kent, which brings him about £104; July 12, 1376, he receives from the King £71 4s. 6d., being the price of certain forfeited wool; a pound in Chaucer's day was worth about twelve pounds of current English money to-day; during 1374-86 he lives in a dwelling-house above the gate of Aldgate; late in 1376 he is appointed, with Sir John Burley, to discharge some secret service abroad; in February, 1377, he is sent with Sir Thomas Percy on another secret mission into Flanders; early in 1378 he is in France; he is sent into Lombardy in May, 1378, when the name of the poet John Gower appears as one of the attorneys in charge of the office of comptroller during Chaucer's absence; Chaucer and Gower become intimate friends, but their friendship is afterward broken by quarrels; in May, 1382, Chaucer is appointed comptroller of the petty customs in the port of London, during the King's pleasure, with permission to employ a deputy; in 1386 he is elected Knight of the shire for Kent; at the close of 1386, on account of political disturbances, he loses both of his offices. The years 1372-86 constitute Chaucer's second literary period, which shows the marked influence of Dante and other Italians, especially the Florentines; with the exception of the "House of Fame," written about 1380, Chaucer abandons during this period the octosyllabic couplet, and principally uses the heroic couplet; he writes the "Assembly of Foules" in 1375, "Troilus and Croyseyde" about 1380, and begins the "Legend of Good Women" about 1382, but never completes it; his wife is thought to have died in 1387.

In April, 1388, he goes on his famous pilgrimage to Canterbury; in May of this year, because of great financial distress, he sells two of his pensions to one John Sealby; in

1389 Chaucer is appointed clerk of the King's works at the palace of Westminster, at the Tower of London, at the castle of Berkhamstead, at the King's manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, and at the mews for the King's falcons at Charing Cross; this work he is permitted to execute by deputy; in July, 1390, he is ordered to procure workmen and material for the repair of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and is also made a member of a commission to repair the banks of the Thames between Woolwich and Greenwich; he shows himself unable successfully to manage these public affairs; in 1391 he is dismissed from his clerkship, but is immediately appointed, together with one Richard Brittle, as forester of North Petherton Park, Somersetshire; in 1397 Chaucer is appointed sole forester; in 1394 he obtains from King Richard a pension of £50 for life; through carelessness in the management of his business affairs he is so often sued for debt that the King takes him for two years under his special protection; in October, 1398, Chaucer receives another grant of a tun of wine daily; October 3, 1399, four days after Henry IV. comes to the throne, in response to Chaucer's appeal to the King entitled the "Complaint of my Purse," he receives an additional pension of £26 13s. 4d., to be paid annually; he leases a house situated in the garden of the Lady Chapel, Westminster, and makes it his home; he dies October 25, 1400, and is buried in the "Poets' Corner" in Westminster Abbey. The years 1386-1400 constitute the third literary period of Chaucer's life; he begins the great work of this period, the "Canterbury Tales," in 1387, and completes the greater part by the close of 1393; he writes also during this period "*L'Envoy à Scogan*," "*L'Envoy à Bukton*," and a "*Balade de Vilage sanz Peinture*."

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

### ✓ I. Naturalness — Artlessness — Freshness. —

"Chaucer is the most natural, as Pope is the most artificial, of the great English poets. He not only observes truly and feels keenly, but he keeps his feeling free and unspoiled by his knowledge of books and of affairs. . . . The study of books, in an age when study so often led to pedantry, left him as free and human as it found him. . . . His simplicity is that of elegance, not of poverty. The quiet unconcern with which he says his best things is peculiar to him among English poets. . . . He prattles inadvertently away, and all the while, like the princess in the story, lets fall a pearl at every other word. It is such a piece of good luck to be natural! It is the good gift which the fairy grandmother brings to her prime favorite in the cradle. . . . He is always natural, because if not always absolutely new, he is always delightfully fresh, because he sets before us the



world as it honestly appeared to Geoffrey Chaucer, and not a world as it seemed proper to certain persons that it ought to appear. . . . There is in him the exuberant freshness and greenness of spring. . . . Reading him is like brushing through the dewy grass at sunrise. Everything is new and sparkling and fragrant. . . . His first merit, the chief one in all art, is sincerity. . . . He is the most unconventional of poets and the frankest. If his story be dull, he rids his hearers of all uncomfortable qualms by being himself the first to yawn. . . . His nature was sensitive to the natural. . . . There was a pervading wholesomeness in the writings of this man—a vernal property that soothes and refreshes in a way of which no other has ever found the secret. I repeat to myself a thousand times,

‘ Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote  
 The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote  
 . . . . .  
 And smale fowles maken melodye’,

and still at the thousandth time a breath of uncontaminated springtide seems to lift the hair on my forehead. The most hardened roué of literature can scarce confront these simple and winning graces without feeling something of the unworn sentiment of his youth revive in him. Poets have forgotten that the way to be original is to be healthy; that the fresh color so delightful in all good writing is won by escaping from the fixed air of self into the brisk atmosphere of universal sentiments; and that to make the common marvellous, as if it were a revelation, is the test of genius. It is good to retreat now and then from beyond earshot of the introspective confidences of modern literature, and to lose ourselves in the gracious worldliness of Chaucer. . . . The quiet unconcern with which he says his best things is peculiar to him among English poets, though Goldsmith, Addison, and Thackeray have approached it in prose.”—*Lowell*.

"There is no other English author so absolutely free, not merely from effort but from the faintest suggestion of effort. . . . No healthier nature than his can be found in the whole range of our literature among the poets whose personality appears prominent in their writings. There is not a trace of morbid feeling in his lines, which still glow for us with all the freshness of immortal youth."—*T. R. Lounsbury*.

"His poetry resembles the root just springing from the ground rather than the full-blown flower. His muse is no 'babbling gossip of the air,' fluent and redundant; but, like a stammerer or a dumb person that has just found the use of speech, crowds many things together with eager haste, with anxious pauses and fond repetitions, to prevent mistakes. . . . There were none of the commonplaces of poetic diction in our author's time, no reflected lights of fancy, no borrowed roseate tints; he was obliged to inspect things for himself, to look narrowly, and almost to handle the object, as in the obscurity of morning we partly see and partly grope our way."—*William Hazlitt*.

"No doubt this simplicity—*naïveté*, we are fond of calling it—is one of the first delights that every reader experiences on his first introduction to Chaucer."—*Alfred Ainger*.

"Chaucer's artlessness is half the secret of his wonderful ease in story-telling, and is so engaging that, like a child's sweet unconsciousness, one would not wish it otherwise."—*H. A. Beers*.

"Many of his verses come to us like the prattle of childhood."—*William Minto*.

"A charming freshness forms the atmosphere of all his work; he is perpetually new."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A clerk ther was of Oxenford also,  
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.  
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,  
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake ;  
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.  
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy ;  
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,  
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce."

—*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.*

"Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man  
 Which that was holden povrest of hem alle ;  
 But hye god som tyme senden can  
 His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle ;  
 Ianicula men of that throp him calle."

—*The Clerkes Tale.*

"A povre widwe, somdel stope in age,  
 Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,  
 Bisyde a grove, stonding in a dale.  
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,  
 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,  
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,  
 For litel was hir catel and hir rente ;  
 By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,  
 She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two."

—*The Nonne Preestes Tale.*

**2. Liquid Smoothness.**—"He had a very fine ear for the music of verse, and the tale and the verse go together like the voice and music. Indeed, so softly flowing and bright are they that to read them is like listening in a meadow full of sunshine to a clear stream rippling over its bed of pebbles."  
 —*Stopford Brooke.*

"He was . . . one of the best versifiers that ever made English trip and sing with a gayety that seemed careless, but where every foot beats time to the time of thought.  
 . . . He found our language lumpish, stiff, unwilling, too

apt to speak Saxonly in grouty monosyllables ; he left it enriched with the longer measure of the Italian and Provençal poets. He reconciled, in the harmony of his verse, the English bluntness with the dignity and elegance of the less homely Southern speech."—*Lowell*.

"Chaucer's versification, considering the time at which he wrote, and that versification is a thing in a great degree mechanical, is not one of his least merits. It has considerable strength and harmony, and its apparent deficiency in the latter respect arises chiefly from the alterations which have since taken place in the pronunciation or mode of accenting the words of the language."—*William Hazlitt*.

"A little long they [Chaucer's 'Tales'] may be ; all the writings of this age, French, or imitated from the French, are born of too prodigal minds ; but how they glide along ! A winding stream which flows smoothly on level sand, and glitters now and again in the sun, is the only image we can find."—*Taine*.

"It would be difficult to find a parallel in Italian verse of any date to the easy and thoroughly English fluency of Chaucer's facile riding rhyme."—*Francis Palgrave*.

[He is] " . . . the master who uses our language with a power, a freedom, a variety, a rhythmic beauty, that, in five centuries, not ten of his successors have been found able to rival. . . . There is in his verse a music which hardly ever loses itself, and which at times is as sweet as that in any English poet after him. . . . Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry, he is our 'well of English undefiled,' because, by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement, he makes an epoch and founds a tradition. In Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, we can follow the tradition of the liquid diction, the fluid movement of Chaucer."—*T. H. Ward*.

"No student of the poet's writings needs now to be told that the art of versification was an art in which he was su-

premely interested, and to which he gave the most careful study. The result is that he became one of the greatest masters of melody that our literature has on its rolls."—*T. R. Lounsbury*.

"He has an exquisite ear for music, and pays great attention to the melodious flow of his verse."—*Walter Skeat*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,  
 And kneling, pitously to him she seyde,  
 'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.'  
 With that hir kerchief of hir heed she breyde,  
 And over his litel yēn she it leyde;  
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,  
 And in-to heven hir yēn up she caste.  
 'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright, Marye,  
 . . . . .  
 Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse  
 Rewest on every rewful in distresse!'"

—*The Tale of the Man of Lawe*.

"The bisy larke, messenger of day,  
 Saluēth in hir song the morwe gray;  
 And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,  
 That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,  
 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves  
 The silver dropes hanging on the leves."

—*The Knightes Tale*.

"Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,  
 For every man and womman dooth his might  
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende  
 Fil on the welkne shoon the sterres light.  
 For more solempne in every mannes sight  
 This feste was, and gretter of costage,  
 Than was the revel of hir mariage."

—*The Clerkes Tale*.

✓3. **Genial Humor—Kindly Satire.**—"All his best work as a poet was done at the instigation of love and humor. It is remarkable that, while both his serious and his comic productions are founded, in most cases, on pre-existing works of art, in the serious pieces he follows his original much more closely than in the comic. In his tales, as Tyrwhitt says, 'He is generally satisfied with borrowing a slight hint of his subject, which he varies, enlarges, and embellishes at pleasure, and gives the whole the air and color of an original.' His imagination dwelt by preference in the regions of brightness, sweetness, softness, and laughter in its broadest as well as in its subtlest varieties. . . . Affairs of the heart in high and humble life are his themes; he is the sympathetic poet of the aspirations, sorrows, and manifold ludicrous complications of the tender passion. . . . Chaucer's humor is the most universally patent and easily recognized of his gifts. The smile or laugh that he raises, by refined irony or by broad jest and incident, is conspicuously genial. The great criterion of good nature, the indispensable basis of humor, is the power of making and sustaining a jest at one's own expense; and none of our humorists bears this test so well as Chaucer. He often harps on his own supposed imperfections, his ignorance of love, his want of rhetorical skill, his poverty."—*William Minto.*

"A hearty laugh and a thrust in the ribs are his weapons. He makes fun of you to your face; and even if you wince a little, you cannot help joining in his mirth. . . . In Chaucer's poetry the humor is playing all the time round the horizon like heat-lightning. It is unexpected and unpredictable; but as soon as you turn away from watching for it, behold it flashes again as innocently and softly as ever. . . . The satire of the other [Chaucer] is genial with the broad sunshine of humor, into which the victims walk forth with a delightful unconcern, laying aside of themselves the disguises that seem to make them uncomfortably warm, till they have

made a thorough betrayal of themselves so unconsciously that we almost pity while we laugh. . . . There is no touch of cynicism in all he wrote. . . . It is true . . . of his humor that it pervades his comic tales like sunshine, and never dazzles the attention by a sudden flash. Sometimes he brings it in parenthetically, and insinuates a sarcasm so slyly as almost to slip by without our notice. Sometimes he turns round upon himself and smiles at a trip he has made into fine writing. . . . Nay, sometimes it twinkles roguishly through his very tears. . . . Chaucer drew from the South a certain airiness of sentiment and expression, a felicity of phrase, and an elegance of turn hitherto unprecedented and hardly yet matched in our literature, but all the while kept firm hold of his native soundness of understanding and that genial humor which seems to be the proper element of worldly wisdom. . . . His humor . . . in its suavity, its perpetual presence, and its shy unobtrusiveness, is something wholly new in literature."—*Lowell*.

"He brightens his delineations with kindly and enjoying humor—the humor of a man who knows life in its multiform aspects from observing it with mingled keenness and sympathy and mixing in it personally."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"There is [in his verse] a sweet humanity, which takes all bitterness from his satire, and exhibits some degree of gracious sympathy with every sort and condition of men. . . . His humor is usually subtle and playful; even at its broadest and coarsest it is genuine, and has at least the artist's apology to excuse it."—*J. C. Robertson*.

"He never sneers, for he had a wide charity, and we can always smile in his pages at the follies and forgive the sins of men."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"The most striking thing about Chaucer's humor is its great kindliness. He laughs, but not maliciously. He has nothing of the partisan, for he looks at the whole world with the same mirthful gaze. Nothing is too high for his laughter,

nothing is too low. . . . He does not run after a jest ; he does not joke merely for the sake of joking. He has his humor under such perfect control that he can shift his humorous point of view as he changes from one speaker to another."—*O. W. Holmes.*

"Concerning Chaucer's use of the power which he in so large a measure possessed, viz., that of covering with ridicule the palpable vices or weaknesses of the classes or kinds of men represented by some of his character-types, one assertion may be made with tolerable safety. Whatever may have been the first stimulus and the ultimate scope of the wit and humor which he here expended, they are not to be explained as moral indignation in disguise. And in truth Chaucer's merriment flows spontaneously from a source very near the surface ; he is so extremely diverting because he is so extremely diverted himself."—*T. H. Ward.*

"His satire . . . is genial. For the lowest he has no scorn as he has for the hypocrisies of men who wear religion as a cloak to their offences."—*Henry Morley.*

"The native bent of his genius, the hilarity of his temper, betrays itself by playful strokes of raillery and concealed satire when least expected. His fine irony may have sometimes left his commendations, or even the objects of his admiration, in a very ambiguous condition."—*Benjamin Disraeli.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute  
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,  
In which she had a cok, hight Chauntecleer,  
In al the land of crowing nas his peer.  
His vois was merier than the mery orgon  
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon ;  
Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge  
Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.  
By nature knew he ech ascencioun  
Of equinoxial in thilke toun ;



For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,  
 Thanne crewe he, that it might nat be amended."

—*The Nonne Preestes Tale.*

"Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn.  
 Beth war by this ensample old and playn  
 That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves,  
 Of swich thing as they wolde han secree fayn,  
 If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves."

—*The Monkes Tale.*

"He was an esy man to yeve penaunce,  
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;  
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive  
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.  
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.  
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
 He may nat wepe, al-thogh him sore smerte.  
 Therefore, instede of weping and preyeres,  
 Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres."

—*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.*

#### ✓ 4. Sympathy with Suffering—Simple Pathos.—

"In depth of simple pathos and intensity of conception, never swerving from his subject, I think no other writer comes near him, not even the Greek tragedians."—*William Hazlitt.*

"The deepest pathos of the drama . . . is sudden as a stab, while in narrative it is more or less suffused with pity, a feeling capable of prolonged sustention. This presence of the author's own sympathy is noticeable in all Chaucer's pathetic passages. . . . When he comes to the sorrow of his story, he seems to croon over his thoughts, to soothe them and dwell upon them with a kind of pleased compassion, as a child treats a wounded bird which he fears to grasp too tightly, and yet cannot make up his mind wholly to let go."—*Lowell.*

"He is at heart surpassingly gentle and compassionate. The innocence and sufferings of women move him deeply."  
—*Henry S. Pancoast.*

"Pity for inevitable suffering is a note of Chaucer's mind which forever distinguishes him from Boccaccio and makes him out as the true forerunner of the poet of Hamlet and Othello. . . . He is overcome by 'pity and ruth' as he reads of suffering, and his eyes 'wax foul and sore' as he prepares to tell of its infliction."—*T. H. Ward.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Allas, the wo ! allas, the peynes stronge,  
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe !  
Allas, the deeth ! allas, myn Emelye !  
Allas, departing of our companye !  
Allas, myn hertes quene ! allas, my wyf !  
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf !  
What is this world ? what asketh men to have ?  
Now with his love, now in his colde grave  
Allone, with-outen any companye."

—*The Knightes Tale.*

"O, which a pitous thing it was to see  
Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here !  
'Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow,' quod she,  
'That ye han saved me my children dere !  
Now rekke I never to ben deed right here ;  
Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,  
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace.'"

—*The Clerkes Tale.*

"Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face  
Among a prees, of him that hath be lad  
Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no grace  
And swich a colour in his face hath had,  
Men mighte knowe his face, that was bistad,  
Amonges alle the faces in that route :  
So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute."

—*The Man of Lawes Tale.*

**5. Respect for Womanhood.**—"Chaucer alone, in his time, felt the whole beauty of womanhood, and felt it most in its most perfect type—in wifehood, with the modest graces of the daisy, with its soothing virtues, and its power of healing inward wounds. Physicians in his day ascribed such power to the daisy, which, by Heaven's special blessing, was made common to all, and was the outward emblem also of the true and pure wife in its heart of gold and its white crown of innocence. . . . As the range of Shakespeare was from Imogen to Dame Quickly and lower, so the range of Chaucer is from the ideal patience of the wife Griselda, or the girlish innocence and grace of Emelie in the 'Knight's Tale' to the Wife of Bath and lower; and in each of these great poets the predominating sense is of the beauty and honor of true womanhood. If there were many Englishmen who read what we have of the 'Canterbury Tales' straight through, it would not be necessary to say that, even in the fragment as it stands, expression of the poet's sense of the worth and beauty of womanhood, very greatly predominates over his satire of the weaknesses of women. . . . In a sense of his own, he takes the daisy for his flower, and rises high above all poets of his age in honor to marriage and praise of the purity of the wife's white daisy crown."—*Henry Morley*.

"We have no hesitation in placing him very high in the list of those who have exalted our ideal of the womanly character. Womanliness is indeed the characteristic feature of Chaucer's women."—*Alfred Ainger*.

"His works show that he was not likely to fail in that respectfulness that women are said to love. He is on all occasions the champion of 'gentle woman, gentle creatures;' and however much sly fun he makes of their foibles, he compensates amply by frequently expressed indignation at their wrongs and by praises of their many virtues. . . . All Chaucer's works show that he was most intimately pervaded by chivalrous sentiment. . . . It is womanhood in dis-

treas that enters his heart with the keenest stroke. . . .  
 His gallery of distressed heroines was as wide as the range of legend and history that was known to him. . . . The thought of their suffering agitates him, destroys his composure ; he cannot proceed without stopping to express his compassion or to appeal to Heaven against the caprice of Fortune or the wickedness of men."—*William Minto*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Lo, what gentillesse these women have,  
 If we coude know it for our rudenesse !  
 How busie they be us to keepe and save,  
 Both in hele, and also in sikenesse !  
 And always right sorrie for our distresse,  
 In every manner ; thus shew thy routhe,  
 That in hem is al goodnesse and trouthe."  
 —*A Praise of Women*.

" O blissful ordre, of wedlok precious,  
 Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,  
 And so commended and appreved eek,  
 That every man that halt him worth a leek,  
 Up-on his bare knees oghte al his lyf  
 Thanken his god that him hath sent a wyf ;  
 Or elles preye to god him for to sende  
 A wyf, to laste un-to his lyves ende."  
 —*The Marchante Tale*.

" In hir is heigh beautee with-outte pryde,  
 Yowthe, with-outte grenehede or folye ;  
 To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,  
 Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tyrannye.  
 She is mirour of alle curteisye ;  
 Hir hertē is verray chambre of holinesse,  
 Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse."  
 —*The Tale of the Man of Lawe*.

✓ 6. **Love of Nature.**—" His descriptions of nature are as true as his sketches of human character ; and incidental

touches in him reveal his love of the one as unmistakably as his unflagging interest in the study of the other. . . . When he went forth on these April and May mornings, it was not solely with the intent of composing a roundelay or a *marguerite* ; but we may be well assured that he allowed the songs of the little birds, the perfume of the flowers, and the fresh verdure of the English landscape to sink into his very soul."—*T. H. Ward*.

"He was the first who made the love of nature a distinct element in our poetry. . . . The delightful and simple familiarity of the poet with the meadows, brooks, and birds, and his love of them, has the effect of making every common aspect of nature new ; the May morning is transfigured by his enjoyment of it ; the grass of the field is seen as those in Paradise beheld it ; the dew lies on our heart as we go forth with the poet in the dawning, and the wind blows past our ear like the music of an old song heard in the days of childhood."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Chaucer's heart fitted him very well to be the poet of tender sentiment. He seems to have dwelt with fond observation on everything that was bright and pretty, from 'the smale fowles that slepen all the night with open eye,' to the little herd-grooms playing on their pipes of green corn. He watched the little conies at their play, the little squirrels at their sylvan feasts. . . . But of all things of beauty in nature, the singing-birds were his most especial favorites. He often dwells on the ravishing sweetness of their melodies."—*William Minto*.

"The Troubadour hailed the return of spring ; but with him it was a piece of empty ritualism. Chaucer took a true delight in the new green of the leaves and the return of the singing-birds. . . . He has never so much as heard of the 'burthen and mystery of all this unintelligible world.' His flowers and trees and birds have never bothered themselves with Spinoza. He himself sings more like a bird than

any other poet, because it never occurred to him, as to Goethe, that he ought to do so. He pours himself out in sincere joy and thankfulness. He is the first great poet who really loved outward nature as the source of conscious pleasurable émo-tion. . . . Chaucer took a true delight in the new green of the leaves and the return of singing-birds—a delight as simple as that of Robin Hood.”—*Lowell*.

“On the first of May Chaucer rises and goes out into the meadows. Love enters his heart with the balmy air; the landscape is transfigured and the birds begin to sing.”—*Taine*.

“He is, more than all [other] English poets, the poet of the lusty spring, of ‘Aprille’ with her ‘showres sweet’ and the ‘foules’ song; of ‘May with all her floures’ and her green; of the new leaves in the wood and the meadows new—powdered with the daisy, the mystic Marguerite of his ‘Legend of Good Women.’ A fresh, vernal air blows through all his pages.”—*H. A. Beers*.

“Chaucer had an equal eye for truth of nature and discrimination of character; and his interest in what he saw gave new distinctness and force to his power of observation. . . . Nature is the soul of art: there is a strength as well as a simplicity in the imagination that reposes entirely on nature that nothing else can supply. . . .

“Chaucer’s descriptions of natural scenery . . . have a local truth and freshness which gives the very feeling of the air, the coolness or moisture of the ground.”—*William Hazlitt*.

“No poet ever loved nature more than Chaucer did; but it was with a simple, unreflective, child-like love. . . . It was nature in her ‘first intention,’ her most obvious aspects, that attracted him. . . . It is not on nature as a great whole, much less as an abstraction, that his thought usually dwells. It is the outer world in its most concrete forms and objects with which he delights to interweave his

poetry—the homely scenes of South England, the oaks and other forest trees, the green meadows, quiet fields, and comfortable farms, as well as the great castles where the nobles dwelt. . . . I know not that the habitual forms of English landscape, those that are most rural and most unchanged, have ever since found a truer poet, one who brings before the mind the scene and the spirit of it, uncolored by any intervention of his own thought or sentiment. And his favorite season—it is the May-time. Of this he is never tired of singing.”—*J. C. Shairp*.

“Lover of men and lover of books, Chaucer is no less the lover of nature, for her alone delighting to leave his studies. . . . We must think of him as he shows himself in one of his poems, going out alone in the meadows in the stillness of early morning and falling on his knees to greet the daisy.”—*Henry S. Pancoast*.

“How joyously he watches the daisy—

‘Knelyng alway til it unclosed was  
Uppon the smale, softe, swete, gras’—

and the ‘vyolet al newe and fresche perwynke (French *per-venche*, periwinkle), and the lilye on her stalke grene, and the may-blossoms partie whyte and rede.’ How he notes the glimpsing of eyes through the leaves, the squirrels sitting up on the branches ‘making feasts,’ the hives of bees, the fun of stamping for eels, the rooks’ nests on the great trees, and the thousand things showing so strong a love of country sights and sounds, animals, and birds, and such knowledge of them, that we half suspect that he was not brought up as a boy in London town.”—*H. R. Haweis*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ On every bough the briddes herde I singe,  
 With voys of aungel in hir armonye,  
 Som besyed hem hir briddes forth to bringe,  
 The litel conyes to hir pley gunne hye,  
 And further al aboute I gan espye  
 The dredful roo, the buk, the hert, and hinde,  
 Squerels and beestes smale of gentil kinde.”

—*The Parlement of Foules.*

“ For May wol have no slogardye anight,  
 The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,  
 And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,  
 And seieth, ‘ Arys and do thyn observaunce.’ ”

—*The Knightes Tale.*

“ And anone as I the day aspide,  
 No longer would I in my bed abide,  
 But to a wood that was fast by  
 I went forth alone boldely,  
 And held the way down by a brookes side,  
 Till I came to a laund of white and greene,  
 So faire a one had I never in been,  
 The ground was greene, ypoured with daisie,  
 The flourés and the grevés liké hie,  
 Al greene and white, was nothing elles seene.

. . . . .

And the river that I sat upon,  
 It madé such a noisé as it ron,  
 Accordaunt with the birdés armony,  
 Me thought it was the besté melody  
 That mighté ben yheard of any mon.”

—*The Cuckoo and the Nightingale.*

**7. Sincerity—Elevation of Character.**—“ He knew and lived in the society of persons of rank, yet long before Tennyson he placed the kind heart above the coronet and



faithfulness over the claims of high descent. Nobility of soul had ever his warmest admiration, without regard to the rank of life in which it was revealed. . . . Chaucer has no animosities and cherishes no grudge."—*J. C. Robertson.*

"Here was a healthy, hearty man, so genuine that he need not ask whether he were genuine or no, so sincere as quite to forget his own sincerity, so truly pious that he could be happy in the best world God chose to make, so humane that he loved even the foibles of his kind. Here was a truly epic poet, without knowing it, who did not waste time in considering whether his age were good or bad, but, quietly taking it for granted as the best that ever was or could be for him, has left us such a picture of contemporary life as no man ever painted. . . . He could look to God without abjectness and on man without contempt."—*Lowell.*

"The general tenor of his works is decidedly kindly, honorable, and sincere, permeated with high Christian feeling. . . . What he says of human happiness and honor and duty could only have been said by a man with a conscience, nursed though he had been through the thorny ways of a court. . . . No one ever uttered loftier words on the meaning of true 'gentrie,' in the sense of gentle birth, or words that better commend themselves to an honest republican age, though they were reiterated by a courtier. He puts a very earnest protest into the Wife of Bath's mouth against those who, 'boren of a gentil house . . . n'yl himselve no gentil dedes;' 'only a villain's sinful dedes makith a cherl,' he says, and follows it up with the prettiest definition of noble descent, quite epigrammatic in its grace and truth:

'For gentillesse n' is but the renomee  
Of thine anncestres.'

—*H. R. Haweis.*

"In many passages he insists on the value of the purity of womanhood and the nobility of manhood, taking the latter to be dependent upon good feeling and courtesy. As he

says in the 'Wife of Bath's Tale,' the 'man who is always the most virtuous, and most endeavors to be constant in the performance of gentle deeds, is to be taken to be the greatest gentleman. Christ desires that we should derive our gentleness from Him, and not from our ancestors, however rich.' "

—*Walter Skeat.*

"He is content to find grace and beauty in truth. He exhibits, for the most part, the naked object, with little drapery thrown over it. His metaphors, which are few, are not for ornament but use, and as like as possible to the things themselves. He does not affect to show his power over the reader's mind but the power which his subject has over his own. . . . There is no artificial pompous display, but a strict parsimony of the poet's materials, like the rude simplicity of the age in which he lived. . . . The poetry of Chaucer has a religious sanctity about it, connected with the manners and superstition of the age. It has all the spirit of martyrdom."—*William Hazlitt.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The firste stok fader of gentillesse,  
 What man that claymeth gentil for to be,  
 Must folowe his trace and alle his wittes dresse  
 Vertu to sewe and vyces for to flee.  
 For unto vertu longeth dignitee,  
 And noght the revers sauflly dar I deme,  
 Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe.

"The firste stok was ful of rightwisnesse,  
 Trewe of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,  
 Clene of his goste and loved besinesse,  
 Against the vyce of slouth in honestee;  
 And but his heir love vertu, as dide he,  
 He is noght gentil, thogh he riche seme, ✓  
 Al were he mytre, croune, or diademe."

—*A Ballad on Gentillesse.*

“ Fly from the prease and dwell with soothfastnesse.  
 Suffise unto thy good though it be small ;  
 For horde hath hate and climbing likelnesse.  
 Prease hath envy, and wele is blent over all ;  
 Savour no more than thee behove shall ;  
 Rede well thy selfe that other folke canst rede,  
 And trouth shall thee deliver, it is no drede.”

—*Good Counsaill.*

“ For o thing, sires, sauflly dar I seye,  
 That frendes everich other moot obeye,  
 If they wol longe holden compnye,  
 Love wol nat ben constreyned by maistrye ;  
 When maistrie comth, the god of love anon  
 Beteth hise winges, and farewel ! he is gon !  
 Love is a thing as any spirit free ;  
 Wommen of kinde desiren libertée,  
 And nat to be constreyned as a thral ;  
 And so don men, if I soth seyen shal.”

—*The Frankeleyns Tale.*

✓ **8. Narrative Power.**—“ Chaucer is a great narrative poet. In this respect he has no equal in our tongue. . . . Chaucer’s success as a narrative poet is largely due to the ease and fulness with which he makes us enter into his own thoughts and feelings. . . . There is nothing more conspicuous in the ‘*Canterbury Tales*’ than the individuality of their composer. The one distinguishing trait that makes him the great story-teller of the English language is that he seizes upon the central points of interest, and lets everything else go by that does not contribute to the effectiveness of their representation.”—*T. R. Lounsbury.*

“ There is something more pleasant than a fine narrative, and that is a collection of fine narratives, especially when the narratives are all of different colorings. . . . Chaucer is like a jeweller with his hands full: pearls and glass beads, sparkling diamonds and common agates, black jet and ruby roses, all that history and imagination had been able to gather

and fashion during three centuries in the East, in France, in Wales, in Provence, in Italy. All that had rolled his way, clashed together, broken, or polished by the stream of centuries, and by the great jumble of human memory, he holds in his hands, arranges it, composes therefrom a long sparkling ornament, with twenty pendants, a thousand facets, which by its splendor, varieties, contrasts may attract and satisfy the eyes of those most greedy for amusement and novelty."

—*Taine*.

"Chaucer is a great narrative poet, and in this species of poetry, though the author's personality should never be obtruded, it yet unconsciously pervades the whole, and communicates an individual quality—a kind of flavor of its own.

. . . The pleasure Chaucer takes in telling his stories has in itself the effect of consummate skill, and makes us follow all the windings of his fancy with sympathetic interest. His best tales run on like one of our inland rivers, sometimes hastening a little and turning upon themselves in eddies that dimple without retarding the current; sometimes loitering smoothly, while here and there a quiet thought, a tender feeling, a pleasant image, a golden-hearted verse, opens quietly as a water-lily, to float on the surface without breaking it into ripples."—*Lowell*.

"He is the prince of story-tellers; and however much he may move others, he is not moved himself. . . . The 'Canterbury Tales'—a story-book than which the world does not possess a better."—*Alexander Smith*.

"He conducts us through his narratives with facile eloquence, smoothing over what is unpalatable, waving aside digressions, interspersing easy reflections, never staying too long upon one topic. . . . No poet could be more animated than Chaucer. All his works are full of bright color, fresh feeling, rapid ease, and gaiety of movement. There is no tedious dulness in his descriptions, no lingering in the march of his narrative. With all his loquacity and vivacity,

he knows when his readers have had enough of one thing, and passes easily on to something else. The ease of his transitions is very remarkable; . . . he always keeps his main subject firmly and clearly in view; and his well-marked digressions add to the general animation by dispersing the feeling of rigid restraint without tending in the least to produce confusion."—*William Minto*.

"He is our greatest story-teller in verse. All the best tales are told easily, sincerely, with great grace, and yet with so much homeliness that a child would understand them."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"A great poet by virtue of his natural gifts, he was the greatest of narrative poets by virtue of his knowledge of mankind."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"This duk, of whom I make mencion,  
When he was come almost unto the toun,  
In al his wele and in his moste pryde,  
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,  
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye  
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,  
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;  
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make  
That in this world nis creature livinge  
That herde swich another weymentinge,  
And of this cry they wolde never stenten  
Til they the reynes of his bredel henten."

—*The Knightes Tale*.

"A theef he was, for sothe, of corn and mele,  
And that a sly and usaunt for to stele.  
His name was hoten dēynous Simkin.  
A wyf he hadde y-comen of noble kin;  
The person of the toun hir fader was.  
With hir he yaf ful many a panne of bras,  
For that Simkin sholde in his blood allye.  
She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;

For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,  
 But she were wel e-norissed and a mayde,  
 To saven his estaat and yomanrye,  
 And she was proud and pert as is a pye."

— *The Reeves Tale.*

" At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,  
 Ther dwelte a king that werreyed Russye,  
 Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty man.  
 This noble king was cleped Cambinskan,  
 Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun  
 That ther nas no-wher in no regioun  
 So excellent a lord in alle thing ;  
 Him lakked noght that longeth to a king.  
 As of the secte of which that he was born  
 He kept his lay, to which that he was sworn ;  
 And the-rto he was hardy, wys, and riche,  
 And piëtous and just alwey y-liche ;  
 Sooth of his word, benigne, and honourable,  
 Of his corage as any centre stable."

— *The Squires Tale.*

**9. Realism—Minuteness—Single Strokes—Vividness.**—" Other fourteenth century writers can tell a story . . . but none else of that day can bring the actual world of men and women before us with the movement of a Florentine procession picture, and with a color and a truth of detail that anticipate the great Dutch masters of painting."—*T. H. Ward.*

" When Chaucer describes anything, it is commonly by one of those simple and obvious epithets or qualities that are so easy to miss. Is it a woman ? He tells us that she is *fresh* ; that she has *glad* eyes ; that every day her beauty *newed*. . . . Sometimes he describes amply by the merest hint, as where the Friar, before setting himself softly down, drives away the cat. We know without need of more words that he has chosen the snuggest corner. . . . Nothing escapes his sure eye for the picturesque—the cut of the beard, the soil of

armor on the buff jerkin, the rust on the sword, the expression of the eye. . . . Chaucer is the first to break away from the dreary traditional style and give us not merely stories, but the lively pictures of real life as the ever renewed substance of poetry. . . . His parson is still unmatched, though Dryden and Goldsmith have both tried their hands on him.”  
—*Lowell*.

“Chaucer excels as the poet of manners or of real life. . . . Chaucer most frequently describes things as they are. . . . The characteristic of Chaucer is intensity. . . . As Spenser was the most romantic and visionary, so Chaucer was the most practical of all the great poets, the most a man of business and the world. His poetry reads like history. Everything has a downright reality, at least in the relator’s mind. A simile or a sentiment is as if it were given in upon evidence. . . . He speaks of what he wishes to describe with the accuracy, the discrimination of one who relates what has happened to himself, or has had the best information from those who have been eye-witnesses of it. The strokes of his pencil always tell. He dwells only on the essential, on that which would be interesting to the person really concerned : yet, as he never omits any material circumstance ; he is prolix from the number of points on which he touches, without being diffuse on any one. . . . The chain of his story is composed of a number of fine links, closely connected together, and riveted by a single blow.”—*William Hazlitt*.

“In these [the characters of the ‘*Canterbury Tales*’] his knowledge of the world availed him in a peculiar degree, and enabled him to give such an accurate picture of ancient manners as no contemporary nation has transmitted to posterity. It is here that we view the pursuits and employments, the customs and diversions of our ancestors, copied from the life, and represented with equal truth and spirit, by a judge of mankind whose penetration qualified him to discern their foibles or discriminating peculiarities and by an artist who understood

that proper selection of circumstances and those predominant characteristics which form a finished portrait."—*Thomas Warton*.

"The 'Canterbury Tales' are as real as anything in Shakespeare or Burns. . . . The prologue, . . . in which we make the acquaintance of the pilgrims, is the ripest, most genial and humorous—altogether the most masterly thing which Chaucer has left us. In its own way, and within its own limits, it is the most wonderful thing in the language. The people we read about are as real as the people we brush clothes with in the street—nay, much more real; for we not only see their faces and the fashion and texture of their garments, we know also what they think, how they express themselves, and with what eyes they look out on the world. Chaucer's art in this prologue is simple perfection. He indulges in no irrelevant description; he airs no fine sentiments; he takes no special pains as to style or poetic ornament; but every careless touch tells, every sly line reveals character; the description of each man's horse-furniture and array reads like memoir."—*Alexander Smith*.

"To read Chaucer closely is really to live for the moment in the fourteenth century, to hear the talk and see the faces of the whole people. Shakespeare never did so much for his time. He gave us philosophy, thoughts, fancy, dramatic action, but we do not get from him a whole century alive again, a whole nation speaking for itself, class by class, the real English home-life; men and their thoughts at once; the colors, the manners, the accents, the dress, the characters, the sentiments, the science,—town, field, park and river scenery, farm-house, inn, castle, and wharf, all brought back to us, down to the very scent of them, down to the cat driven from the best seat, the pet dog, birds, and the coals on the fire. We get that from Chaucer. . . . His characters are splendidly varied and true to nature."—*H. R. Haweis*.



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Blak was his berd, and manly was his facé.  
 The cercles of his eyen in his heed  
 They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed,  
 And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,  
 With kempe heres on his browes stoute;  
 His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge,  
 His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.  
 And as the gyse was in his contree  
 Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he,  
 With foure whyte boles in the trays.  
 In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,  
 With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,  
 He hadde a beres skin, col-black, for-old.  
 His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,  
 As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak."

—*The Knightes Tale.*

"This wydwe, of which I telle yow my tale,  
 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,  
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,  
 For litel was hir catel and hir rente;  
 For housbondrye of such as God hir sente,  
 She fond hir-self and eek hir doghtren two.  
 Three large sowes hadde she and namo,  
 Three kyn and eek a sheep that highte Malle.  
 Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,  
 In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel."

—*The Nonne Preestes Tale.*

"A garden saw I full of blossomy bowes,  
 Upon a river, in a grene mede,  
 Ther as that swetnesse evermore ynow is,  
 With floures whyte, blewe, yelow, and rede,  
 And colde welle-stremes, no-thing dede,  
 That swommen ful of smale fisses lighte,  
 With finnes rede and scales silver-brighte."

—*The Parlement of Foules.*

✓ 10. **Portrayal of Character.**—"He is the first great painter of character, because he is the first great observer of it among European writers. . . . His works contain passages displaying a penetrating insight into the minds of men, as well as a keen eye for their manners, together with a power of generalizing, which, when kept within due bounds, lies at the root of the wise knowledge of human kind so admirable to us in our great essayists from Bacon to Addison and his modern successors."—*T. H. Ward.*

"Quaint as they [his characters] are, they are the very quintessence of human nature. They live yet, fresh and vivid, passionate and strong, as they did on their way to the tomb of St. Thomas upward of five hundred years ago."—*William Howitt.*

"No author who ever existed (Shakespeare alone excepted) seizes more powerfully the manners, the humors, and the sentiments of mankind, or delineates them more vigorously. . . . Every point which has relation to the action of the human mind or the modifications of man as he appears in a state of society, is treated by him with a vividness and energy which at once command our sympathy and extort our astonishment. . . . His personages always feel, and we confess the truth of their feelings; what passes in their minds, or falls from their tongues, has the clear and decisive character which proclaims it human, together with the vividness, subtleness, and delicacy which few authors in the most enlightened ages have been equally fortunate in seizing."—*William Godwin.*

"Above all, Chaucer has an eye for character that seems to have caught at once not only mental and physical features, but even its expression in variety of costume—an eye, indeed, second only, if it should be called second in some respects, to that of Shakespeare. I know of nothing that may be compared to the prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales,' and to the story of the 'Canon's Yeoman,' before Chaucer. But it is in his characters, especially, that his

manner is large and free ; for he is painting history, though with the fidelity of a portrait. He brings out strongly the essential traits, characteristic of the genus rather than of the individual. . . . William Blake says, ' The characters of Chaucer's Pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and all nations.' Some of the names and titles are altered by time, but the characters remain forever unaltered, and consequently they are the physiognomies and lineaments of universal human life, beyond which Nature never steps. . . . In his outside accessories, it is true, he is sometimes as minute as if he were illuminating a missal. . . . In this he has an artistic purpose. It is here that he individualizes, and while every touch harmonizes with and seems to complete the moral features of the character, he makes us feel that we are among living men and not the abstracted images of men . . . Chaucer, never forgetting the essential sameness of human nature, makes it possible, and even probable, that his motley characters should meet on a common footing, while he gives to each the expression that belongs to him, the result of special circumstances or training. Indeed, the absence of any suggestion of caste cannot fail to strike any reader familiar with the literature on which he is supposed to have formed himself. No characters are at once so broadly human and so definitely outlined as his. Belonging, some of them, to extinct types, they continue contemporary and familiar forever."—*Lowell*.

" The readers of Chaucer's poetry feel more nearly what the persons he describes must have felt than perhaps those of any other poet. His sentiments are not voluntary effusions of the poet's fancy, but are founded on the natural impulses and habitual prejudices of the characters he has to represent. There is an inveteracy of purpose, a sincerity of feeling, which never relaxes or grows vapid, in whatever they do or say. . . . The picturesque and the dramatic are in him closely blended together and hardly distinguishable ; for he

principally describes external appearances as indicating character, as symbols of internal sentiment. There is a meaning in what he sees, and it is this that catches his eye by sympathy. . . . [His characters] are every one samples of a kind, abstract definitions of a species. . . . Chaucer, it has been said, numbered the classes of men as Linnæus numbered the plants. Most of them remain to this day; others that are obsolete, and may well be dispensed with, still live in his description of them."—*William Hazlitt*.

"To a certain extent Lowell is right in saying that there is no caste feeling among Chaucer's Pilgrims. . . . But we should greatly misunderstand the delicacy of Chaucer's sense of manners as well as of character if we went away with the impression that in the 'Canterbury Tales' there is no trace of the distinctions of rank, and that in the pilgrimage there is no respect paid to persons. . . . A line is drawn, though unobtrusively, and with delicate suggestive art, between the 'gentles' and the other pilgrims. If this had not been done, we should have been compelled to say that our poet inaccurately portrayed the life of the times. But he has done it, and done it not by harsh, angular, forced assertion, but easily and naturally in his clear-sighted shaping and working out of his materials. . . . If we fail to perceive this contrast between the serious and the ludicrous side of the Canterbury pilgrimage, if we miss the poet's reconciliation of the two without repression of either, Chaucer's genius, in so far as regards manners and character, has labored for us in vain."—*William Minto*.

"He does more [than narrate]. He observes characters, notes their differences, studies the coherence of their parts, endeavors to bring forward living and distinct persons—a thing unheard of in his time, but which the renovators in the sixteenth century, and first among them Shakespeare, will do afterwards. . . . For the first time, in Chaucer, character

stands out in relief; its parts are held together; it is no longer an unsubstantial phantom. You may comprehend its past and see its present action. Its externals manifest the personal and incommunicable details of its inner nature and the infinite complexity of its economy and motion. To this day, after four centuries, that character is individualized and typical; it remains distinct in our memory, like the creations of Shakespeare and Rubens. . . . Chaucer begins with the portrait of all his narrators, . . . about thirty distinct figures, of every sex, condition, age, each painted with his disposition, age, costume, turns of speech, little significant actions, habits, antecedents, each maintained in his character by his talk and subsequent actions so well, that we can discern here, before any other notion, the germ of the domestic novel as we write it to-day."—*Taine*.

"Chaucer alone comes near to Shakespeare in that supreme quality of the dramatist which enables him to show the characters of men as they are betrayed by themselves, wholly developed as if from within, not as described from without by an imperfect and prejudiced observer. . . . The procession of Chaucer's Pilgrims is the very march of man on the high-road of life. . . . It [the 'Canterbury Tales'] is the work of a man who knew the manner of that true pilgrimage of life, against which the stout-hearted Wycliff had never preached."—*Henry Morley*.

"It is the first time in English poetry that we are brought face to face, not with characters or allegories or reminiscences of the past, but with living and breathing men, men distinct in temper and sentiment as in face or costume or mode of speech; and with this distinctness of each maintained throughout the story by a thousand shades of expression and action. It is the first time, too, that we meet with the dramatic power which not only creates each character but continues it with its fellows, which not only adjusts each tale or jest to the temper of the person who utters it, but fuses all into a poetic unity.

It is life in its largeness, its variety, its complexity which surrounds us in the 'Canterbury Tales.' . . . And it is life that he loves—the delicacy of its sentiment, the breadth of its farce, its laughter and its tears, the tenderness of its Griseldis or its Smollett—like adventures of the millers and the clerks. It is this largeness of heart, this wide tolerance, which enables him to reflect man for us as none but Shakespeare has ever reflected him and to do this with a pathos, a shrewd sense and kindly humor, a freshness and joyousness of feeling, that even Shakespeare has not surpassed."—*J. R. Green.*

"Chaucer's perception of character and his skill in delineating it were marvellous. . . . Chaucer's characters are more than portraits of classes: they are people, real, live, individual."—*R. H. Stoddard.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,  
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.  
Than wolde he speke and crye as he were wood.  
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.  
A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,  
That he had lerned out of som decree ;  
No wonder is, he herde it al the day ;  
And eek ye knowen well how that a jay  
Can clepén 'Watte' as well as can the pope.  
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,  
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye ;  
Ay, '*Questio quid iuris*,' wolde he crye.  
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde ;  
A better felawe sholde men noght finde."

—*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.*

"Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioresse,  
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy ;  
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sēynt Loy ;  
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.  
Ful wel sche song the service divyne,

Entuned in hir nose ful semely ;  
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,  
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.  
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle ;  
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe."

—*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.*

" Embrouded was he, as it were a mede  
 Al ful of fresshe floures whyte and rede.  
 Singinge he was or floytynge al the day ;  
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.  
 Short was his goune, with sleves long and wyde.  
 Wel coude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.  
 He coude songes make and wel endyte,  
 Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreie and wryte.  
 So hote he lovede that by nightertale  
 He sleep namore than doth a nightergale.  
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,  
 And carf biforn his fader at the table."

—*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.*

**II. Coarseness.**—"It is very misleading to apologize, as some writers on Chaucer do, for the gross obscenity of certain of the tales, on the ground that this was the outspoken fashion of the times—that decorum then permitted greater freedom of language. The savor of particular words may have changed since the time of Chaucer ; but then, as now, people with any pretensions to refinement were bound to abstain strictly in the presence of ladies from all ribaldry of speech and manner, on pain of being classed with 'churls' and 'vileins.' . . . And in the 'Canterbury Tales' Chaucer carefully guards himself against being supposed to be ignorant of this law. The ribald tales are introduced as being the humours of the lower orders, persons ignorant or defiant of the rules of refined society, and, moreover, as we have seen, excited, intoxicated, out for a pilgrimage as riotous as our pilgrimage to the Derby.

Such riotous mirth was very far indeed from being the fashion of the time among fashionable people. Mark how careful Chaucer is to shield himself from the responsibility of it. In the Prologue (line 725) he prays his readers of their courtesy not to set down his plainness of speech as his 'vileinye.' He is bound to record faithfully every thing that was said, though it had been said by his own brother."—*William Minto*.

"In spite of some external stains, which those who have studied the influence of manners will easily account for without imputing them to any moral depravity, we feel that we can join the pure-minded Spenser in calling him 'most sacred, happy spirit.' "—*Lowell*.

"In all the unfettered invention and nudity of style, there was no grossness in the temper, and less in the habits, of the poet. He addressed his own age as contemporaries were doing in France and Italy. . . . Our poet has himself pleaded that, having fixed on his personage, he had no choice to tell any other tale than what that individual would himself have told."—*Isaac D'Israeli*.

Illustration of this characteristic is evidently uncalled for here. Those who wish, may find representative specimens in "The Somnours Tale," lines 30 to 50 or 95 to 100.



## SPENSER, 1552 (?)–1599

**Biographical Outline.**—Edmund Spenser, born in London about 1552; his father was “gentleman by birth,” though a journeyman weaver, of Lancashire family; Spenser enters the newly founded Merchant Taylors’ School, probably in 1561, being one of “certyn poor schollers of the scholls aboute London;” he enters Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, as a sizer in May, 1569; during the same year was published a translation of certain sonnets of du Bellay, ascribed to John Van Der Noodt, but doubtless made by Spenser; all the sonnets were published in 1591 as Spenser’s own translation; at Cambridge he wins distinction in Greek, Latin, French, and Italian, and becomes a close student of Petrarch and Chaucer; as an undergraduate he suffers from poverty and ill-health; he forms close friendships with Gabriel Harvey (Hobbinoll) and Edward Kirke; in 1576 he receives from Cambridge the degree of M.A., and leaves the University; he spends some time with kinsfolk near Hurstwood, and there falls in love with “a gentlewoman of no mean house,” but she disdains him, and his disappointment is recorded in “The Shepheard’s Calendar” (written about this time and published in 1591) and also in “Colin Clout’s Come Home Again,” written in 1591 and published in 1595; he leaves Hurstwood for London at the advice of Harvey, who was in favor with the Earl of Leicester, and as early as 1598 Spenser becomes a member of the household of Leicester House (afterward Essex House) in the Strand; he writes poems for the amusement of Leicester, and apparently acts as his agent in delivering despatches to Leicester’s correspondents in foreign countries; Spenser probably visited Ireland in 1577, and is known to have been

in France and Spain in 1579; through Leicester, he meets Sir Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, and they become intimate friends, to their mutual advantage; with Sidney and other friends, Spenser forms a literary club called the Areopagus, where they debate the application of the classical rules of quantity to English metres, though Spenser confesses, "I am more in love with my versifying."

During 1579 and 1580 Spenser wrote several poems, which have either been lost or have been incorporated into poems under titles different from those given them by Harvey and Spenser; among these were nine English comedies, a poem entitled "Dreams," which Harvey thought equal to Petrarch's "Visions" (this was actually prepared for printing, with a glossary and illustrations); "The Dying Pelican" (also prepared for the press), and a prose tract entitled "The English Poet;" some of these last poems are possibly embodied in part in the "Faery Queen;" while Spenser is a member of Leicester's household he also writes his "Hymns in Honor of Love and Beauty" (published in 1596), and begins the "Faerie Queene;" "The Shepheard's Calendar" was published December 5, 1579, with a dedication to Sidney, and bearing the pseudonym "Immerito;" Spenser's friend, Kirke, supplied notes and a glossary; the archaic dialect in the "Calendar" is in imitation of the Doric dialect of Theocritus, whose pastoral poetry suggested the theme to Spenser; Colin in the "Calendar" is Spenser, and Alguind is the Archbishop of Canterbury; the "Calendar" was received with enthusiasm, and passed through five editions in eighteen years; it was translated into Latin by John Dove in 1585, and it gave to Spenser at once the first place among living English poets; in 1580 he published two volumes, consisting of extracts from his correspondence with Harvey and dealing principally with questions of English scansion.

In July, 1580, through the influence of Leicester and Sidney, Spenser is appointed secretary to Lord Grey, then just

appointed Lord-deputy to Ireland; he reaches Dublin with Grey, August 12, 1580, and remains in Ireland till the close of 1598, excepting two visits to England in 1589-90 and 1596; he accompanies Lord Grey on his expedition to Kerry in November, 1580; as secretary to Lord Grey he transcribes many official documents, some of which are still extant; in 1582 he receives £162 as "rewards" for his secretaryship; in March, 1591, he is appointed clerk to the Irish Court of Chancery, an office which he holds for several years; besides his salary he receives much landed property, and he holds a high social position among the English society of Dublin, although Spenser always regarded the Irish as a savage nation; he continues "The Faery Queene," and writes, about 1586, his elegy on "Astrophel" (Sidney), which was first published with "Colin Clout" in 1595; in June, 1598, he resigns his clerkship in the Dublin Court of Chancery, and buys the post of Clerk of the Council of Munster; when, in 1586, the property of the earls of Desmond in Munster was declared forfeit and was "planted" with English colonists, Spenser received 3,028 acres; in 1588 he settles in Kilcolman Castle, on his Irish estate, Doneraile, County Cork, where a sister acts as his housekeeper; he has serious trouble with his neighbors, especially one, Viscount Roche, but derives comfort from his intercourse with another neighbor, Sir Walter Raleigh, whom Spenser had doubtless before met in London and who, like Spenser, had received a portion of the confiscated Desmond estate; Raleigh visits Spenser at Kilcolman, and is shown the first three books of the "The Faery Queene," which he praises highly.

In October, 1589, Spenser goes with Raleigh to London, determined to publish his poems and to seek Elizabeth's favor; he publishes the first three books of the "Faery Queene" in 1590; although the poem is favorably received, Spenser's efforts to secure more congenial occupation than that offered by his Irish clerkship are at first unsuccessful;

while in London he writes "Daphnaida," an elegy on Lady Douglass, and dedicates it to the Marchioness of Northampton; it is published at once, and in February, 1590-91, the Queen gives to Spenser a pension of £50 a year; disappointed with the meagreness of the pension, he soon returns to Kilcolman Castle, where he writes "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," late in 1591, though it is not published till 1595; in 1591 his publisher collected some of Spenser's shorter poems and published them under the title of "Complaints," containing "Sundrie small Poems of the World's Vanitie;" the volume included "The Ruines of Time," "The Teares of the Muses," "Virgil's Gnat" (a translation of the "Culex" erroneously ascribed to Virgil), "Mother Hubberd's Tale," "The Ruins of Rome" (translations from du Bellay), "Muipatmos," "Visions of the World's Vanitie," Bellay's "Visions," and Petrerches "Visions;" most of these poems were, Spenser said, "long rithems composed in the raw conceipt of my youth;" owing to the satire on Lord Burghley contained in "The Ruines of Time" and that on court follies and vices in "Mother Hubberd's Tale," both poems were "called in;" a proposal by his publisher to issue others of Spenser's neglected or lost pieces was not favorably received.

In 1592 he falls in love again—this time with Elizabeth, daughter of James Boyle, a relative of Richard Boyle; Spenser's sonnets called "Amoretti" are really a diary of his courtship; he is married in June, 1594, probably at Cork, and the poet celebrates the event in his matchless "Epithalamion;" meantime his Irish neighbor, Lord Roche, continues his litigation against Spenser, and in February, 1594, wins possession of a part of the poet's estate; during the same year, and perhaps in consequence, Spenser assigns his clerkship of the Munster Council; in 1595 Ponsonby, Spenser's London publisher, issues the "Amoretti" and "Epithalamion" and also "Colin Clout's Come Home Again,"

with an appendix containing "Astrophel," Spenser's elegy on his friend Sidney; Ponsonby publishes Books IV., V., and VI. of the "Faery Queene" early in 1596, with allegorical illustrations, and binds in the same volume a second edition of the first three books; the book becomes very popular, but King James VI., of Scotland, complains to the English ambassador concerning reflections on his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, and urges that Spenser be punished; he is protected, however, by friends at Court, where he appears in the autumn of 1596, still hoping for preferment; while at Greenwich, in September, 1596, he publishes and dedicates to two countesses "Four Hymnes," including his "Hymn in Honor of Love and Beauty," written long before, and the new hymns on "Heavenly Love" and "Heavenly Beauty."

In November, 1596, while a guest at Essex House, Spenser writes his "Prothalamion" in honor of the marriage of the two daughters of his host, Edward Somerset, Earl of Worcester; during this London visit of 1596 he writes also his prose pamphlet, "View of the Present State of Ireland," being based on his impressions of "these late wars in Mounster"—a pamphlet taking an extreme and most uncharitable view of all Irishmen, whom the poet thought worthy only of extermination; Spenser also completes a work on the antiquities of Ireland, which has been entirely lost; early in 1597 he returns to Ireland, depressed in spirits and broken in health; in September, 1598, he is made Sheriff of Cork; the famous Tyrone Rebellion had already broken out, and Spenser, as Sheriff, was taken unawares; in October, 1598, the rebels overran all Munster, and burned Kilcolman Castle over Spenser's head; the poet fled to Cork with his wife and four children; Ben Jonson declares that one of Spenser's children perished in the flames; at Cork he draws up a "brief note of Ireland," in which he appeals to Elizabeth to "show unto these vile caitiffs" the terror of her wrath; in December, 1598, Spenser is sent by the President of Munster to London

with a despatch reporting the progress of the rebellion; he finds a lodging at an "inn" in King Street, Westminster, where he dies, January 16, 1598-99; Ben Jonson and other contemporary writers assert that he died "for lack of bread," but this is hardly credible in view of Spenser's pension and his official position as bearer of a message to the Court; he was buried by friends in Westminster Abbey; according to Cowden his hearse was "attended by poets, and mournful elegies and poems, with the pens that wrote them, were thrown into his tomb."

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

✓ **I. Rich Imagination—Idealism.**—Lamb has fitly bestowed upon Spenser the title of "the poet's poet," and Scott declares that, from Cowley downward, every youth of imagination has been enchanted with the splendid legends of the "Faery Queene." Milton directly acknowledges him as his master.

"In the world into which Spenser carries us, there is neither time nor space, or rather it is outside of and independent of them both, and so is purely ideal, or, more truly, imaginary; yet it is full of form, color, and all earthly luxury, and so far if not real yet apprehensible by the senses.

. . . He was not long in choosing between an unreality which pretended to be real and those everlasting realities of the mind which seem unreal only because they lie beyond the horizon of the every-day world and become visible only when the mirage of fancy lifts them up and hangs them in an ideal atmosphere. . . . I have called the world to which Spenser transports us a world of unreality. I have wronged him. It is from pots and pans and stocks and futile gossip and inch-long politics that he emancipates us, and makes us free of that to-morrow, always coming and never come, where ideas shall reign supreme. He lifts everything,

not beyond recognition, but to an ideal distance, where no mortal, I had almost said human, speck is visible. Instead of the ordinary bridal gifts, he hallows his wife with an Epithalamion fit for a conscious goddess. . . . His fancy, habitually moving about in worlds not realized, unrealizes everything at a touch. . . . The language and verse of Spenser at his best have an ideal lift in them, and there is scarcely any of our poets who can so hardly help being poetical. . . . He who, when his singing robes were on, could never be tempted nearer to the real world than under some subterfuge of pastoral or allegory. . . . It is evident that to him the Land of Faery was an unreal world of picture and illusion, in which he could shut himself up from the actual, with its shortcomings and failures. . . . [‘The Faery Queene’ is] full of life and light and the other-worldliness of poetry. . . . This place, somewhere between mind and matter, between soul and sense, between the actual and the possible, is precisely the region which Spenser assigns to the poetic sensibility of impression. . . . His fancy, habitually moving about in worlds not realized, unrealizes everything at a touch. . . . Other poets have held their mirrors up to nature, mirrors that differ very widely in the truth and beauty of the images they reflect; but Spenser’s is a magic glass, in which we see few shadows cast back from actual life, but visionary shapes conjured up by the wizard’s art from some confusedly remembered past or some impossible future; it is like one of those still pools of mediæval legend which covers some sunken city of the antique world; a reservoir in which all our dreams seem to have been gathered. As we float upon it, we see that it pictures faithfully enough the summer clouds that drift over it, the trees that grow about its margin, but in the midst of these shadowy echoes of actuality we catch faint tones of bells that seem blown to us from beyond the horizon of time, and looking down into the clear depths, catch glimpses of towers and far-shining



knights and peerless dames that waver and are gone. Is it a world that ever was, or shall be, or can be, or but a delusion? Spenser's world, real to him, is real enough for us to take a holiday in, and we may well be content with it when the earth we dwell on is often too real to allow of such vacations. It is the same kind of world that Petrarca's Laura has walked in for five centuries with all ears listening for the music of her footfall. . . . He is a standing protest against the tyranny of the commonplace, and sows the seeds of a noble discontent with prosaic views of life and the dull uses to which it may be put."—*Lowell*.

"He began to believe, with more than the usual faith of the poet, in the beautiful or terrible or fantastic shapes with which his fancy was peopled. . . . And it was this wonderful and various troop of ideal shapes, palpable to his own eye and domesticated to his own heart, that he sent forth in an endless succession of pictures through the magical pages of the 'Faery Queene.' . . . The inwardness of Spenser's genius, the constant reference of his creative faculty to internal ideals rather than to objective facts, has given his poem a special character of remoteness. . . . His cheerfulness has no connection with mirth, but springs from his perception of an ideal life, which has become a reality to his heart and imagination."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"In Spenser, we wander in another world among ideal beings. The poet takes and lays us in the lap of a lovelier nature, by the sound of softer streams, among greener hills and fairer valleys. He paints nature, not as we find it, but as we expected to find it, and fulfils the delightful promise of our youth. He waves the wand of enchantment, and at once embodies airy beings and throws a delicious veil over all actual objects. The two worlds of reality and of fiction are poised on the wings of his imagination."—*William Hazlitt*.

"Spenser's power of taking up real objects, persons, and incidents, of plunging these in some solvent of the imagina-

tion, and then of recreating them—the same and not the same—is manifest throughout. Everything has been submitted to the shaping power of the imagination ; everything has been idealized ; yet Spenser does not remove from real life, does not forsake his own country and his own time. . . . The mere visible shows of Spenser's poem are indeed goodly enough to beguile a summer's day in some old wood and to hold us from morning to evening in a waking dream."—*Edward Dowden*.

"He was pre-eminently a creator and a dreamer, and that most naturally, instinctively, unceasingly. . . . This fount of living and changing forms is inexhaustible in Spenser ; he is always imaging ; it is his specialty. He has but to close his eyes and apparitions arise ; they abound in him, crowd, overflow ; in vain he pours them forth ; they continually float up, more copious and more dense. . . . To unfold these epic faculties and to display them in the sublime region where his soul is naturally at home, he requires an ideal stage, situated beyond the bounds of reality, with personages who could hardly exist, and in a world which could never be. . . . Magic is the mould of his mind, and impresses its shape upon all that he imagines or thinks. Involuntarily he robs objects of their ordinary form. If he looks at a landscape, after an instant he sees it quite differently. He carries it, unconsciously, into an enchanted land ; the azure heaven sparkles like a canopy of diamonds, meadows are clothed with flowers, a biped population flutters in the balmy air, palaces of jasper shine among the trees, radiant ladies appear, carved balconies above galleries of emerald. This unconscious toil of mind is like the slow crystallizations of nature. A moist twig is cast into the bottom of a mine, and is brought out again a hoop of diamonds. . . . He leads us to the summit of fairy-land, soaring above history, on that extreme verge where objects vanish and pure idealism begins. . . . We perceive

that his characters are not flesh and blood, and that all these brilliant phantoms are phantoms and nothing more. We take pleasure in their brilliancy without believing in their substantiality ; we are interested in their doings without troubling ourselves about their misfortunes. We know that their tears and cries are not real. Our emotion is purified and raised. We do not fall into gross illusions ; we have that gentle feeling of knowing ourselves to be dreaming. We, like him, are a thousand leagues from actual life, beyond the pangs of painful pity, unmixed terror, violent and bitter hatred. We entertain only refined sentiments, partly formed, arrested at the very moment they were about to affect us with too sharp a stroke. . . . He is not yet settled and shut in by that species of exact common-sense which was to bound and cramp the whole modern civilization. In his heart he inhabits the poetic and shadowy land from which men were daily drawing further and further away. . . . He enters straightway upon the strangest dreams of the old story-tellers without astonishment, like a man who has still stranger dreams of his own. Enchanted castles, monsters and giants, duels in the woods, wandering ladies, all spring up under his hands, the mediæval fancy with the mediæval generosity, and it is just because the world is unreal that it so suits his humour. Imagination was never more prodigal or inventive."—*Taine*.

"To the last it [his genius] moved in a world which was not real, which never had existed, which, anyhow, was only a world of memory and sentiment. He never threw himself frankly upon human life as it is ; he always viewed it through a veil of mist which greatly altered its true colours, and often distorted its proportions. . . . The spell is to be found in the quaint stateliness of Spenser's imaginary world and its representatives. . . . The conventional supposition was that at the Court, though everyone knew better, all was perpetual sunshine, perpetual holiday, perpetual triumph, per-

petual love-making. It was the happy reign of the good and wise and lovely. It was the discomfiture of the base, the faithless, the wicked, the traitorous. This is what is reflected in Spenser's poem: at once, its stateliness (for there was no want of grandeur and magnificence in the public scene ever before Spenser's imagination) and its quaintness, because the whole outward apparatus of representation was borrowed from what was past, or from what did not exist, and implied surrounding circumstances in ludicrous contrast with fact."

—*R. W. Church.*

"To judge from internal evidence, no man ever lived more exclusively in and for poetry than Spenser. We try in vain for any term to express the voluptuous completeness of his immersion in the colours and music of poetry. He was a man of reserved and gentle disposition, and he turned luxuriously from the rough world of facts to the ampler ether, the diviner air, the softer and more resplendent forms of Arcadia and the delightful land of Faery. While the dramatists were laboring to make the past present, his imagination worked in an opposite line: his effort was to remove hard, clear, visible, and tangible actualities to dreamy regions and there to reproduce them in a glorified state with softer and warmer forms and colours. . . . His own Pastoral land and Faery land he had furnished with a geography, a population, and a history of their own, and there chiefly his imagination loved to dwell and pursue its creative work."—*William Minto.*

"Spenser is the farthest removed from the ordinary cares and haunts of the world of all the poets that ever wrote except, perhaps, Ovid; and this, which is the reason why men of business and the world do not like him, constitutes his most bewitching charm with the poetical. . . . The poetic faculty is so abundantly and beautifully predominant in him above every other . . . that he has always been felt by his countrymen to be what Charles Lamb called him, 'the poet's poet.'"—*Leigh Hunt.*

“ If they [readers] want poetry, if they want to be translated from a world which is not one of beauty into a world where the very uglinesses are beautiful, into a world of perfect harmony in color and sound, of an endless sequence of engaging event and character, of noble passions and actions not lacking in their due contrast, then let them go to Spenser with a certainty of satisfaction.” — *George Saintsbury*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Bring with you all the Nymphs that you can heare  
 Both of the rivers and the forrests greene  
 And of the sea that neighbours to her neare :  
 Al with gay girlands goodly wel beseene.  
 And let them also with them bring in hand  
 Another gay girland,  
 For my fayre love of lillyes and of roses.

. . . . .

And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread  
 For feare the stones her tender foot should wrong,  
 Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,  
 And diaped lyke the discolored mead.”

—*Epithalamion*.

“ Of fayre Elisa [Elizabeth] be your silver song,  
 That blessed wight.  
 The flowre of virgins ; may shee flourish long  
 In princely plight !  
 For shee is Syrinx daughter without spotte,  
 Which Pan, the shepheard's God, of her begot :  
 So sprong her grace  
 Of heavenly race,  
 No mortall blemishe may her blotte.

“ See, where she sits upon the grassie greene,  
 (O seemely sight !)  
 Yclad in scarlot, like a mayden Queen,  
 And ermines white :

Upon her head a Cremosin coronet,  
 With damask roses and daffadillies set;  
     Bay leaves betweene,  
     And primroses greene,  
 Embellish the sweete violete."

—*The Shepheards Calendar.*

" A satyre's sonne, yborne in forrest wyld,  
 By straunge adventure as it did betyde,  
 And there begotten of a lady myld,  
     Fayre Thyamis, the daughter of Labryde;  
 That was in sacred bandes of wedlocke tyde  
     To Therion, a loose, unruly swayne,  
 Who had more joy to raunge the forrest wyde,  
     And chase the salvage beast with busie payne,  
 Then serve his ladies love, and waste in pleasures wayne."

—*The Faery Queene.*

**2. Incongruity—Artificiality.**—Spenser has been generally criticised for allowing the "mystic enthusiasm" of his genius to carry him into frequent inconsistencies. Campbell calls his shepherds "parsons in disguise, who converse about heathen divinities and points of Christian theology."

"Spenser's design was too large and complicated for his imagination to grasp as a whole. It was the necessary condition of a poem thus sociably blending Christian and Pagan beliefs, Platonic ideas and barbaric superstitions, that its action should occur in what Coleridge happily calls mental space. Truth of scenery, truth of climate, truth of locality, truth of costume, could have no binding authority in the everywhere and nowhere of fairy land. . . . It is objected, for example, that, in his enumeration of the trees in one of his forests, he associates trees which in nature do not coexist; but his forest is fairy land. The form of Spenser's 'Shepherd's Calendar' is absurdly artificial, if looked at merely from the outside, but that is not, perhaps, the wisest way to look at anything, except a jail. . . . The spirit of it is fresh and original. . . . There is something fairly ludicrous in

such a duality as that of Prince Arthur and the Earl of Leicester, Arthegall and Lord Gray, and Belphebe and Elizabeth. The reality seems to heighten the improbability, already hard enough to manage. . . . To reign in the air was certainly Spenser's function, . . . but being too poetical is the rarest fault of poets. . . . What practical man ever left such an heirloom to his countryman as the 'Faery Queene?' . . . The bent of his mind was toward a Platonic mysticism."—*Lowell*.

"Here and there, amid armor and passages of arms, he distributes satyrs, nymphs, Diana, Venus, like Greek statues amid the turrets and lofty trees of an English park. There is nothing forced in the union; the ideal epic, like a superior heaven, receives and harmonizes the two worlds; a beautiful pagan dream carries on a beautiful dream of chivalry; the link consists in the fact that they are both beautiful. At this elevation the poet has ceased to observe the differences of races and civilizations. He can introduce into his picture whatever he will; his only reason is, 'That suited;' and there could be no better. Under the glossy-leaved oaks, by the old trunk so deeply rooted in the ground, he can see two knights cleaving each other and the next instant a company of Fauns, who come there to dance. The beams of light which have poured down upon the velvet moss can reveal the dishevelled locks and white shoulders of nymphs. Do we not see it in Rubens? And what signify discrepancies in the happy and sublime illusions of fancy? Are there more discrepancies? Who perceives them? Who feels them? Who does not feel, on the contrary, that, to speak the truth, there is but one world, that of Plato and the poets; that actual phenomena are but outlines—mutilated, incomplete, and blurred outlines—wretched abortions scattered here and there on Time's track, like fragments of clay, half moulded, then cast aside, lying in an artist's studio; that, after all, invisible forces and ideas, which forever renew the actual existences,

attain their fulfilment only in imaginary existences ; and that the poet, in order to express nature in its entirety, is obliged to embrace in his sympathy all the ideal forms by which nature reveals itself? . . . In fact, there are six poems, each of a dozen cantos, in which the action is ever diverging and converging again, becoming confused and starting again ; and all these imaginings of antiquity and of the Middle Ages are, I believe, combined in it. The knight 'pricks along the plaine,' among the trees, and at a crossing of the paths meets other knights with whom he engages in combat ; suddenly, from within a cave, appears a monster, half woman and half serpent, surrounded by a hideous offspring ; further on, a giant with three bodies ; then a dragon, great as a hill, with sharp talons and vast wings. For three days he fights him, and, twice overthrown, he comes to himself only by aid of 'a gracious ointment.' After that there are savage tribes to be conquered, castles surrounded by flames to be taken. Meanwhile ladies are wandering in the midst of forests on white palfreys, exposed to the assaults of miscreants, now guarded by a lion which follows them. Magicians work manifold charms ; palaces display their festivities ; tilt-yards provide endless tournaments ; sea-gods, nymphs, fairies, kings intermingle in these feasts, surprises, dangers."—*Taine*.

"His own errors are the confusion and inconsistency admitted in the stories and allegorical personages of the ancients and the absurd mixture of Christian and heathenish allusions."—*Thomas Chalmers*.

"To the last it [his genius] allied itself in form, at least, with the artificial. . . . A fantastic basis, varying according to the conventions of the fashion, was held essential for the representation of the ideal. . . . A masquerade was necessary. . . . Spenser submitted to this fashion from first to last. When first he ventured on a considerable poetic enterprise, he spoke his thoughts, not in his own name, nor as his contemporaries ten years later did, through the



mouth of characters in a tragic or comic drama, but through imaginary rustics, to whom everyone else in the world was a rustic, and lived among the sheep-folds, with a background of downs or vales or fields and the open sky above. . . . At first acquaintance, the ' Faery Queene ' to many of us has been disappointing. It has seemed not only antique but artificial. It has seemed fantastic. It has seemed, we cannot help avowing, tiresome. It is not till the early appearances have worn off and we have learned to make many allowances and to surrender ourselves to the feelings and the standards by which it claims to affect and govern us that we really find under what noble guidance we are proceeding and what subtle and varied spells are ever around us. . . . It seems to us odd that peaceful sheep-cotes and love-sick swains should stand for the world of the Tudors and Guises, or that its cunning statecraft and relentless cruelty should be represented by the generous follies of an imaginary chivalry. But it was the fashion which Spenser found, and he accepted it. . . . Strong in the abundant but unsifted learning of his day, a style of learning which, in his case, was strangely inaccurate, he not only mixed the past with the present, fairy-land with politics, mythology with the most serious Christian ideas, but he often mixed together the very features which are most discordant in the colors, forms, and methods by which he sought to produce the effect of his pictures. . . . There is a majestic unconsciousness of all violations of probability and of the strangeness of the combinations which it unrolls before us. . . . The perpetual love-making, as one of the first duties and necessities of a noble life, the space which it must fill in the cares and thoughts of all gentle and high-reaching spirits, . . . all this is so far apart from what we know of actual life, the life not merely of work and business but the life of affection and even of passion, that it makes the picture of which it is so necessary a part seem to us in the last degree unreal, unimaginable, grotesquely ridiculous. . . . It is,

of course, a purely artificial reading of the facts of human life and feeling. This all-absorbing, all-embracing passion of love, at least this way of talking about it, was the fashion of the Court. Further, it was the fashion of poetry, which he inherited; and he was not the man to break through the strong bounds of custom and authority. He took what he found; what was his own was his treatment of it. He did not trouble himself with inconsistencies or see absurdities and incongruities."—*R. W. Church.*

"Shepherds in real life do not sit in the shade playing on pan-pipes, improvising songs for wagers of lambs and curiously carved bowls, and discoursing in rhymed verse about morality, religion, and politics. . . . But we miss the whole intention and effect of the poetry if we exact from the poet an adherence to the conditions of the actual life of shepherds. The picturesque environment of hill, wood, dale, silly sheep, and ravenous wild beasts is all that the poet cares for: if he helps us to remember that we are amongst such scenery, he has fulfilled his design. . . . If we would enjoy Spenser's *Arcadia*, we must simply let ourselves float into a dreamland of unsubstantial form and colour. The pastoral surroundings are of value only in so far as they colour and transfigure the sentiments of the poetry. . . . Spenser has been accused of bad taste in mixing up heathen mythology with the narratives of the Bible. He represents Tantalus and Pontius Pilate suffering in the same place of punishment. The answer that wicked men of all ages and creeds may reasonably be supposed to suffer together, is complete. . . . He has been accused of extravagant violations of probability. To this it may be answered that, when we consent to be introduced to Faery land, we sign a dispensation from the ordinary conditions of life."—*William Minto.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Much can they praise the trees so straight and high,  
     The sailing pine ; the cedar proud and tall ;  
 The vine-prop elm ; the poplar never dry ;  
     The builder oak, sole king of forests all ;  
 The aspen good for staves ; the cypress funeral ;  
     The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors  
 And poets sage ; the fir that weepeth still ;  
     The willow, worn of forlorn paramours ;  
 The yew, obedient to the bender's will ;  
 The birch for shafts ; the sallow for the mill ;  
     The myrrh, sweet-bleeding in the bitter wound ;  
 The war-like beech, the ash for nothing ill ;  
     The fruitful olive and the plaintane round."

—*The Faery Queene.*

" The god of Shepheards, Tityrus, is dead,  
     Who taught me homely, as I can, to make ;  
 He, whilst he lived, was the soveraigne head  
     Of shepheards all that bene with love ytake ;  
 Well couth he wayle his woes, and lightly slake  
     The flames which love within his heart had bredd,  
 And tell us mery tales to keepe us wake,  
     The while our sheep about us safely fedde.  
 Nowe dead he is, and lyeth wrapt in lead,  
     (Oh ! why should Death on him such outrage show ? )  
 And all hys passing skil with hym is fledde,  
     The fame whereof doth dayly greater growe.  
 But if on me some little drops would flow  
     Of that the spring was in his learned hedde,  
 I woulde learne these woods to wayle my woe,  
     And teach the trees their trickling teares to shedde."

—*The Shepheards Calendar.*

" It there befell, as I the fields did range  
     Fearlesse and free, a faire young Lionesse,  
 White as the native rose before the chaunge  
     Which Venus' blood did in her leaves impresse.

I spied playing on the grassie playne  
 Her youthfull sports and kindlie wantonnesse,  
 That did all other beasts in beawtie staine.  
 Much was I moved at so goodly sight,  
 Whose like before mine eye had seldome seene,  
 And gan to cast how I her compasse might,  
 And bring to hand that yet had never beene ;  
 So well I wrought with mildnes and with paine,  
 That I her caught disporting on the greene,  
 And brought away fast bound with silver chaine."

—*Daphnaïda.*

✓ 3. **Exquisite Melody.**—Spenser was a great metrician. "All poets," says Professor Wilson, "have, since Warton's time, agreed in thinking the Spenserian stanza the finest ever conceived by the soul of man." Spenser was indeed to prove

"That no tongue hath the muse's heired  
 For verse, and that sweet music to the ear  
 Struck out of rhyme, so naturally as this."

"He had that subtle perfection of phrase and that happy coalescence of music and meaning, where each reinforces the other, that define a man as poet and make all ears converts and partisans. . . . No other English poet has found the variety and compass which enlivened the octave stanza under his sensitive touch. . . . The music makes great part of the meaning, and leads the thought along its pleasant paths. . . . He found the octave stanza not roomy enough, so first ran it over into another line, and then ran that added line over into an Alexandrine, in which the melody of one stanza seems forever longing and feeling forward after that which is to follow. . . . His great glory is that he taught his own language to sing and move to measure harmonious and noble. The service which Spenser did to our literature by this exquisite sense of harmony is incalculable. His fine ear, abhorrent of barbarous dissonance, his dainty tongue,

that loves to prolong the relish of a musical phrase, made possible the transition from the cast-iron stiffness of 'Ferrex and Porrex' to the Damascus pliancy of Fletcher and Shakespeare. . . . There is no ebb and flow in his meter more than on the shores of the Adriatic, but wave follows wave with equable gainings and recessions, the one sliding back in fluent music to be mingled with and carried forward by the next. . . . They [Spenser's dreams] seem singing to you as the sirens to Guyon, and we linger like him."—*Lowell*.

"What he did was to reveal to English ears as it had never been revealed before, at least since the days of Chaucer, the sweet music, the refined grace, the inexhaustible versatility of the English tongue. . . . There is one portion of the beauty of the 'Faery Queene' which, in its perfection and fulness, had never yet been reached in English poetry. This was the music and melody of his verse. It was this wonderful, almost unfailing, sweetness of numbers which probably as much as anything else set the 'Faery Queene' at once above all contemporary poetry. Spenser was the first to show that he had acquired a command over what had hitherto been heard only in exquisite fragments, passing too soon into roughness and confusion. It would be too much to say that his cunning never fails, that his ear is never dull or off its guard. But when the length and magnitude of the composition are considered, with the restraints imposed by the new nine-line stanza, however convenient it may have been, the vigor, the invention, the volume and rush of language, and the keenness and truth of ear amid its diversified tasks are indeed admirable, which could keep up so prolonged and so majestic a stream of original and varied poetical melody. If his stanzas are monotonous, it is with the grand monotony of the sea-shore, where billow follows billow, each swelling diversely, and broken into different curves and waves upon its mounting surface, till at last it falls over and spreads and

rushes up in a last long line of foam upon the beach."—*R. W. Church.*

"Spenser's verse is like a river, wide and deep and strong, but moderating its waves and conveying them all in a steady, soft, irresistible sweep forward. . . . No poem runs with such an entire absence of effort, with such an easy eloquence, with such an effect, as has been said already, of flowing water as the 'Faery Queene'—the inimitably fluent and velvet medium which seems to lull some readers to inattention by its very smoothness and deceive others into a belief in its lack of matter by the very finish and brilliancy of its form."—*George Saintsbury.*

"His best thoughts were born in music. The spirit of poetry is not only felt in his sentiments and made visible in his imagery, but it steals out in the recurring chimes of his complicated stanza."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"To get a full notion of Spenser's power of 'ravishing human sense' with word-music, one must read at least a canto, if not a whole book of the 'Faery Queen.' The dreamy, melodious softness of his numbers and his ideas has something of the luxurious charm that the song of the mermaids had for the ear of Guyon."—*William Minto.*

"Then comes the 'Epithalamion'—the marriage-song made by the poet himself for his own bride, in which the sweet music that runs through all Spenser's verse, and makes it answerable to Milton's praise of divine philosophy as 'a perpetual feast of nectared sweets, where no crude surfeit reigns,' fills us with something like his own sense of fullest earthly joy."—*Henry Morley.*

"His versification is almost perpetual honey."—*Leigh Hunt.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,  
 Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes,  
 And blesseth her with his two happy hands,  
 How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,  
 And the pure snow, with goodly vermill stayne,  
 Like crimson dyde in grayne :  
 That even th' angels, which continually  
 About the sacred altare doe remaine,  
 Forget their service and about her fly,  
 Ofte peeping in her face, that seems more fayre  
 The more they on it stare.  
 But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
 Are governed with goodly modesty,  
 That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,  
 Which may let in a little thought unsownd.  
 Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,  
 The pledge of all our band !  
 Sing, ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,  
 That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring."  
*—Epithalamion.*

"It was upon a holiday,  
 When shepheardes groomes han leave to playe,  
 I cast to goe a shooting.  
 Long wandring up and downe the land  
 With bowe and bolts in either hand,  
 For birds in bushes tooting \*,  
 At length within an Yvie todde \* \*,  
 (There shrouded was the little God)  
 I heard a busie bustling.  
 I bent my bolt against the bush,  
 Listening if anything did rushe,  
 But then heard no more rustling :

. . . . .

With that sprong forth a naked swayne  
 With spotted wings, like Peacock's trayne,

And laughing lope to a tree ;  
 His gylden quiver at his backe,  
 And silver bowe, which was but slacke,  
 Which lightly he bent at me :  
 That seeing, I levelde againe  
 And shott at him with might and maine,  
 As thick as it had hayled."

—*The Shepheards Calendar.*

" Ne suffereth it [love] uncomely idlenesse,  
 In his free thought to build her sluggish nest ;  
 Ne suffereth it thought of ungentlenesse  
 Ever to creepe into his noble brest ;  
 But to the highest and the worthiest  
 Lifteth it up that els would lowly fall :  
 It lettes not fall, it lettes it not to rest ;  
 It lettes not scarce this prince to breath at all.  
 But to his first poursuit him forward still doth call."

—*The Faery Queene.*

✓ 4. **Perception of Beauty—Sensitiveness.**—"Spenser's perception of beauty of all kinds was singularly and characteristically quick and sympathetic. It was one of his great gifts ; perhaps the most special and unstinted. Except Shakespeare, who had it with other and greater gifts, no one in that time approached to Spenser in feeling the presence of that commanding and mysterious idea, compounded of so many things, yet of which the true secret escapes us still, to which we give the name of beauty. . . . A beautiful scene, a beautiful person, a beautiful poem, a mind and character with that combination of charms, which, for want of another word, we call by that half-spiritual, half-material word 'beautiful,' at once set his imagination at work to respond to it and reflect it. . . . Say what we will, and a great deal may be said, of his lavish profusion, his heady and uncontrolled excess, in the richness of picture and imagery in which he indulges, still there it lies before us, like the most



gorgeous of summer gardens, in the glory and brilliancy of its varied blooms, in the wonder of its strange forms of life, in the changefulness of its exquisite and delicious scents. No one who cares for poetic beauty can be insensible to it. He may prefer something more severe and chastened. He may observe on the waste of wealth and power. He may blame the prodigal expense of language and the long spaces which the poet takes up to produce his effect. He may often dislike or distrust the moral aspect of the poet's impartial sensitiveness to all outward beauty. . . . But there is no gainsaying the beauty which never fails and disappoints, open the poem where you will. There is no gainsaying its variety, often so unexpected and novel."—*R. W. Church.*

"He had that perception of the loveliness of things, and that joy in the perception, which makes continual poetic creation a necessity of existence. . . . 'The Faery Queene' proves that the perception of the beautiful can make the heart more abidingly glad than the perception of the ludicrous."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"He is, of all our poets, the most truly sensuous, using the word as Milton probably meant it when he said that poetry should be 'simple, sensuous, and passionate.' . . . Every one of Spenser's senses was as exquisitely alive to the impressions of material, as every organ of his soul was to those of spiritual beauty. . . . We sometimes feel in reading him as if he were the pure sense of the beautiful incarnated to the one end that he might interpret it to our duller perceptions. So exquisite was his sensibility that with him sensation and intellection seem identical, and we 'can almost say his body thought,' . . . So entirely are beauty and the delight in it the native element of Spenser that, whenever, in the 'Faery Queene' you come suddenly on the moral, it gives you a shock of unpleasant surprise, a kind of grit, as when one's teeth close on a bit of gravel in a dish of strawberries and cream. . . . While the senses of most men live in the cellar, his 'were laid in

a large upper chamber which opened toward the sunrising.' . . . Whoever can endure unmixed delight, whoever can tolerate music and painting and poetry all in one, whoever wishes to be rid of thought and to let the busy anvils of the brain be silent for a time, let him read the 'Faery Queene.' There is the land of pure heart's ease, where no ache or sorrow of spirit can enter. . . . This exaltation with which love sometimes subtilizes the nerves of coarsest men so that they feel and see, not the thing as it seems to others, but the beauty of it, the joy of it, the soul of eternal youth that is in it, would appear to have been the normal condition of Spenser."—*Lowell*.

"Beauty, Spenser maintained, is twofold. There is a beauty which is a mere pasture to the eye; it is a spoil for which we grow greedy; . . . and there is the higher beauty of which the peculiar quality is a penetrating radiance; it illuminates all that comes into its presence; it is a beam from the divine fount of light. . . . Upon the whole, the 'Faery Queene,' if nothing else, is at least a labyrinth of beauty, a forest of old romance, in which it is possible to lose oneself more irrecoverably amid the tangled luxury of loveliness than elsewhere in English poetry. . . . But Spenser's rare sensibility to beauty would have found itself ill content if he had had mere solitude of nature, however fair, to contemplate. In his perfect joy in the presence of human beauty he is thoroughly a man of the Renaissance. The visions which he creates of man and woman cast a spell over their creator; he cannot withdraw his gaze from the creatures of his imagination; he must satiate his senses with their loveliness; all his being is thrilled with a pure ecstasy as he continues to gaze. And what form of human beauty is there to which Spenser does not pay a poet's homage? . . . But more than any other form of beauty, that of womanhood charms Spenser, renders his imagination 'empassioned,' or calms and completely satisfies it."—*Edward Dowden*.

"Above all, his was a soul captivated by sublime and chaste beauty, eminently platonic. . . . He has an adoration for beauty worthy of Dante and Plotinus. And this because he never considers it a mere harmony of color and form but an emanation of unique, heavenly, imperishable beauty, which no mortal eye can see, and which is the masterpiece of the great Author of the worlds. Bodies only render it visible; it does not live in them; charm and attraction are not in things but in the immortal idea which shines through them. . . . This is the greatness of his work; he has succeeded in seizing beauty in its fulness because he cared for nothing but beauty. . . . Each story is modulated with respect to another and all with respect to a certain effect which is being worked out. Thus a beauty issues from this harmony—the beauty in the poet's heart—which his whole soul strives to express; a noble and yet a cheerful beauty, made up of moral elevation and sensuous seductions, English in sentiment, Italian in externals, chivalric in subject, modern in its perfection, representing a unique and wonderful epoch, the appearance of paganism in a Christian race and the worship of form by an imagination of the North."—*Taine*.

"For the lover of poetry, for the reader who understands and can receive the poetic charm, the revelation of beauty in metrical language, no English poem is the superior, or, range and variety being considered, the equal of the 'Faery Queene.' . . . He is the poet of all others for those who seek in poetry only poetical qualities."—*George Saintsbury*.

"The love of beauty . . . is the moving principle of his mind. . . . He luxuriates equally in scenes of Eastern magnificence or the still solitude of a hermit's cell, in the extremes of sensuality or refinement."—*William Hazlitt*.

"He is more luxurious than Ariosto or Tasso, more haunted with the presence of beauty."—*Leigh Hunt*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ And over all of purest gold was spread  
 A trayle of yvie in his native hew ;  
 For the rich metall was so coloured  
 That wight who did not well avis'd it vew  
 Would surely deeme it to bee yvie trew ;  
 Low his lascivious armes adown did creepe  
 That themselves dipping in the silver dew  
 Their fleecy flowres they fearefully did steepe,  
 Which drops of christall seemed for wantonese to weepe.”

— *The Faery Queene.*

“ With that I saw two swannes of goodly hewe  
 Come softly swimming downe along the Lee ;  
 Two fairer birds I yet did never see ;  
 The snow which doth the top of Pindus strew,  
 Did never whiter shew  
 Nor Jove himselfe, when he a swan would be  
 For love of Leda, whiter did appeare ;  
 Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he ;  
 Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare ;  
 So purely white they were  
 That even the gentle streame the which them bare  
 Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare  
 To wet their silken feathers, least they might  
 Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so fayre,  
 And marre their beauties bright,  
 That shone as heavens light,  
 Against their brydale day, which was not long :  
 Sweet Themmes ! runne softly till I end my song.”

— *Prothalamion.*

“ Lastly his shinie wings as silver bright,  
 Painted with thousand colours passing farre  
 All painter's skill, he did about him dight :  
 Not halfe so manie sundrie colours arre  
 In Iris bow ; ne heaven doth shine so bright,  
 Distinguished with manie a twinckling starre ;  
 Nor Junoes bird, in her ey-spotted traine,  
 So many goodly colours doth containe.” — *Mniopotmos.*

5. **Moral Elevation — Manliness.** — “ The moral picture presented in the ‘ Faery Queene ’ is the ideal of noble manliness in Elizabeth’s time. We must admire the intrinsic nobleness of Spenser’s general aim, his conception of human life, at once so exacting and so indulgent, his high ethical principles and ideals, his unfeigned honor for all that is pure and brave and unselfish and tender, his generous estimate of what is due from man to man of service, affection, and fidelity. . . . Spenser had in his nature, besides sweetness, his full proportion of the stern and high manliness of his generation ; noble and heroic ideals captivate him by their attractions. He kindles naturally and genuinely at what proves and draws out men’s courage, their self-command, their self-sacrifice. He can moralize with the best in terse and deep-reaching apothegms of melancholy or even despairing experience. . . . That character of the completed man, raised above what is poor and low, and governed by noble tempers and pure principles, has in Spenser two conspicuous elements. In the first place it is based on manliness. . . . The manliness which is at the foundation of all that is good in them [his personages illustrating the virtues] is a universal quality common to them all, rooted and imbedded in the governing idea or standard of moral character in the poem. The substance of the ‘ Faery Queene ’ is the poet’s philosophy of life. . . . It is the quality of soul which frankly accepts the conditions in human life of labor, of obedience, of effort, of unequal success, which does not quarrel with them or evade them, but takes for granted with unquestioning alacrity that man is called—by his call to high aims and destiny—to a continual struggle with difficulty, with pain, with evil, and makes it a point of honor not to be dismayed or wearied out by them. . . . It is a cheerful and serious willingness for hard work and endurance as being inevitable and very bearable necessities, together with even a pleasure in encountering trials which put a man on his mettle, an enjoyment of the contest

and the risk, even in play. It is the quality which seizes on the paramount idea of duty, as something which leaves a man no choice."—*R. W. Church.*

"We are in communion with a nature in which the most delicate, the most voluptuous sense of beauty is in harmony with the austere recognition of the paramount obligations of goodness and rectitude. The beauty of material objects never obscures to him the beauty of holiness."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Spenser's notions of love were so nobly pure as not to disqualify him for achieving the quest of the Holy Grail. . . . His rebukes of clerical worldliness are in the Puritan tone. . . . No man can read the 'Faery Queene' and be anything but the better for it. Through that rude age when Maids of Honor drank beer for breakfast and Hamlet could say a gross thing to Ophelia, he passes serenely, abstracted and high, the Don Quixote of poets. . . . With a purity like that of thrice bolted snow, he had none of its coldness."—*Lowell.*

"We find in this ['Faery Queene,'] and subordinately in his other works, a mind of uncommon exaltation and an earnest love of virtue and nobleness, and we surmise a character to correspond. . . . Among very great poems, the '*Divina Commedia*' of Dante and the 'Faery Queene' of Spenser stand alone in taking as their direct theme moral or spiritual virtue, to be exhibited, enforced, and illustrated."—*W. M. Rossetti.*

"The poet freely chooses what pleases his fancy in classical or neo-classical mythology; yet at heart he is almost Puritan. Not, indeed, Puritan in any turning away from innocent delights; not Puritan in casting dishonor on our earthly life, its beauty, its splendor, its joy, its passion; but Puritan as Milton was when he wrote 'Lycidas,' in his weight of moral purpose, in his love of a grave plainness in religion and of humble laboriousness in those who are shepherds under Christ. . . . To render men's feelings more sane, pure, and permanent—this surely was included in the great design of the 'Faery

Queene;' it was deliberately kept before him as an object by Spenser—'our sage and serious Spenser, whom I dare to name a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.' . . . The ethical teaching of Spenser, extracted from his poetry, is worthy a careful study. Ascetic in the best sense of that word Spenser assuredly was; he desired to strengthen every part of our nature by heroic discipline and to subordinate the lower parts to the higher, so that, if strong, they might be strong for service, not for mastery. . . . By his enthusiasm on behalf of the noblest moral qualities, by his strenuous joy in the presence of the noblest human creatures—man and woman—Spenser breathes into us a breath of life which has an antiseptic power, which kills the germs of disease, and is antagonistic to the relaxed fibre, the lethargy, the dissolution or disintegrating life-in-death of sensuality. Any heroism of man or woman is like wine to gladden Spenser's heart; we see through the verse how it quickens the motion of his blood. A swift, clear flame of sympathy, like an answering beacon lit upon the high places of his soul, even though it be an imagined one, summoning his own. . . . To incite and to conduct men to an active virtue is not only the express purpose of the 'Faery Queene,' but as far as a poem can render such service, the 'Faery Queene' doubtless has actually served to train knights of holiness, knights of temperance, knights of courtesy. . . . He strove, as far as in him lay, to breed a race of high-souled English gentlemen, who should have none of the meanness of the libertine, none of the meanness of the precisian."—*Edward Dowden*.

"Milton himself, the severe Milton, extolled his [Spenser's] moral teachings; his philosophical idealism is evidently no mere poet's plaything or parrot's lesson, but thoroughly thought out and believed in."—*George Saintsbury*.

"It [the 'Faery Queen'] is a continual, deliberate endeavor to enlist the restless intellect and chivalrous feelings of an inquiring and romantic age on the side of goodness and

faith, of unity and justice. . . . Spenser, then, was essentially a sacred poet; but the delicacy and insinuating gentleness of his disposition were better fitted to the veiled than to the direct mode of instruction.”—*John Keble*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ All places they [Ignorance and Barbarism] with follie have possest,

And with vaine toyes the vulgare entertaine;  
But me have banished, with all the rest

That whilome wont to wait upon my traine,  
Fine Counterfesaunce and unhurtfull Sport,  
Delight, and Laughter, deckt in seemly sort.

. . . . .

“ But that same gentle Spirit, from whose pen  
Large streams of honnie and sweete Nectar flowe,  
Scorning the boldnes of such base-born men,  
Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe,  
Doth rather chose to sit in idle Cell,  
Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.”

—*The Teares of the Muses*.

“ Love, lift me up upon thy golden wings,  
From this base world unto thy heavens hight,  
Where I may see those admirable things  
Which there thou workest by thy souveraine might,  
Farre above feeble reach of earthly sight,  
That I thereof an heavenly hymne may sing  
Unto the God of Love, high heavens king.

Many lewd layes (ah! woe is me the more!)  
In praise of that mad fit which fooles call love,  
I have in th’ heat of youth made heretofore,  
That in light wits did loose affection move;  
But all those follies now I do reprove,  
And turned have the tenor of my string,  
The heavenly prayes of true love to sing.”

—*An Hymne of Heavenly Love*.



" Let none then blame me, if in discipline  
 Of vertue and of civill uses lore,  
 I doe not forme them to the common line  
 Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore,  
 But to the antique use which was of yore,  
 When good was onely for it selfe desyred,  
 And all men sought their owne, and none no more ;  
 When Justice was not for most meed out-hyred,  
 But simple Truth did rayne, and was of all admyred."  
 —*The Faery Queene.*

**6. Reverence for Womanhood.**—"Spenser is the creator of some of the most exquisite embodiments of female excellence—the man who had the high honor of saying of women,

' For demigods they be, and first did spring  
 From heaven, though graft in frailness feminine.'

That celestial light which occasionally touches his page with an ineffable beauty, and which gave to him in his own time the name of 'the heavenly Spenser,' is a more wonderful emanation from his mind than its subtlest melodies. We especially feel this in his ideal delineations of woman, in which he has only been exceeded by Shakespeare. . . . He has been called the poet's poet; he should also be called the woman's poet, for the feminine element in his genius is its loftiest, deepest, most angelic element. . . . The tenderness, the ethereal softness and grace, the moral purity, the sentiment untainted by sentimentality, which characterize his impersonations of female excellence, show, too, that the poet's brain had been fed from his heart, and that reverence for woman was the instinct of his sensibility before it was confirmed by the insight of his imagination."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"He pauses, after relating a lovely instance of chastity, to exhort women to modesty. He pours out the wealth of his respect and tenderness at the feet of his heroines. If any

coarse man insults them, he calls to their aid nature and the gods. Never does he bring them on his stage without adorning their name with splendid eulogy."—*Taine*.

"For Spenser, behind each woman made to worship or love rises a sacred presence—Womanhood itself. Her beauty of face and limb is but a manifestation of the invisible beauty, and this is of one kin with the Divine Wisdom and the Divine Love. . . . Spenser's manner of portraiture seems to be at its best in female figures. 'The perfection of woman,' said Coleridge, 'is to be characterless,' meaning that no single prominent quality, however excellent, can equal in beauty and excellence a well-developed, harmonious nature. Spenser loved also this harmony of character, and he found it, or believed he found it, more in woman than in man."—*Edward Dowden*.

"Una is one of the noblest contributions which poetry has ever made to its great picture gallery of character. . . . Britomart is the loftiest of Spenser's heroines. She is not woman unsexed, but woman raised above woman, and therefore woman still. . . . The mode in which Spenser associated the virtues as well as the graces with his special idea of womanhood—an idea very remote from that common in our days—is nowhere more beautifully illustrated than in Book IV., canto IX., where Scudamour describes the temple of Venus and the recovery of his lost Amoret."—*Aubrey De Vere*.

"Where else is woman, in her pure ideal, still so humanly beautiful?"—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,  
The inward beauty of her lively spright,  
Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree,  
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,

And stand astonisht like to those which red  
 Medusaes mazeful hed.  
 There dwels sweet Love and constant Chastity,  
 Unspotted Fayth and comely Womanhood,  
 Regard of Honour and mild Modesty ;  
 There Vyrtnue raynes as Queene in royal throne,  
 And giveth lawes alone,  
 The which the base affections doe obay,  
 And yeeld theyr services unto her will ;  
 Ne thought of things uncomely ever may  
 Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill."

—*Epithalamion.*

" Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse,  
 That moves more deare compassion of mind,  
 Than beautie brought t' unworthy wretchednesse  
 Through envies snares or fortunes freaks unkind.  
 I, whether lately through her brightness blynd,  
 Or through allegeaunce and fast fealty,  
 Which I do owe unto all womankynd,  
 Feel my heart perst with so great agony,  
 When such I see that all for pitty I could dy."

—*The Faery Queene.*

" But ye, faire dames ! the worlds deare ornaments  
 And lively images of heavens light,  
 Let not your beames with such disparagements  
 Be dimd and your bright glorie darkned quight ;  
 But, mindfull still of your first countries sight,  
 Doe still preserve your first informed grace,  
 Whose shadow yet shynes in your beauteous face.

" Loath that foule blot, that hellish fiërbrand,  
 Disloiall lust, faire Beauties foulest blame,  
 That base affections, which your eares would bland,  
 Commend to you by loves abused name,  
 But is indeede the bondslave of defame ;  
 Which will the garland of your glorie marre,  
 And quench the light of your bright shyning star."

—*An Hymne in Honour of Beautie.*

7. **Diffuseness — Obscurity.**—"As a narrative, the 'Faery Queene' has, I think, every fault of which that kind of writing is capable. . . . He habitually dilates rather than compresses. . . . The characters are vague, and, even were they not, they drop out of the story so often and remain out of it so long that we have forgotten who they are when we meet them again; the episodes hinder the advance of the action instead of relieving it with variety of incident or novelty of situation; the plot recalls drearily our ancient enemy, the metrical romance. . . . The generous indefiniteness, which treats an hour more or less as of no account, is in keeping with that sense of endless leisure which it is one chief merit of the poem to suggest. But Spenser's dilation extends to thoughts as well as to phrases and images. He does not love the concise. Yet his dilation is not a mere distention; but the expansion of natural growth in the rich soil of his own mind, wherein the merest stick of a verse puts forth leaves and blossoms."—*Lowell*.

"Much of the covert sense is easily detected; but to explain all would require a commentator who could not only think from Spenser's mind, but recall from oblivion all the gossip of Elizabeth's court. . . . The cumbrousness and confusion and diffusion which the critics have recognized in the poem are to be referred to the fact that the processes of the understanding, coldly contemplating the general plan, are in hopeless antagonism to the processes of the imagination, rapturously beholding and bodying forth the separate facts. The moment the poet abandons himself to his genius he forgets, and makes us forget, the purpose he had in view at the start; and he and we are only recalled from the delicious dream that he may moralize and that we may yawn. . . . He has auroral lights in profusion but no lightning."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"The 'Faery Queene' is an heroic poem in which the heroine, who gives her name to it, never appears: a story, of which the basis and starting-point is whimsically withheld for disclos-

ure in the last book, which was never written. The passion of the age was for ingenious riddling in morality as in love. . . . Exaggeration, profuseness, prolixity, were the literary diseases of the age; an age of great excitement and hope, which had suddenly discovered its wealth and its powers, but not the rules of true economy in using them. . . . There was in Spenser an incontinence of the descriptive faculty. . . . There is continually haunting us, amid incontestable richness, vigor, and beauty, a sense that the work is overdone. . . . There is no want in him, either, of that power of epigrammatic terseness which, in spite of its diffuseness, his age valued and cultivated. But when he gets on a story or scene, he never knows when to stop. His duels go on, stanza after stanza, till there is no sound part left in either champion. . . . He drowns us in words. . . . But say what we will, and a great deal may be said, of his lavish profusion, his heady and uncontrolled excess, in the richness of picture and allegory in which he indulges—still, there it lies before us, like the most gorgeous of summer gardens. . . . The 'Faery Queene,' as a whole, bears on its face a great fault of construction. It carries with it no adequate account of its own story; it does not explain itself or contain in its own structure what would enable a reader to understand how it arose. It has to be accounted for by a prose explanation and key outside of itself. . . . The truth is that the power of ordering and connecting a long and complicated plan was not one of Spenser's gifts. In the first two books, the allegorical story proceeds from point to point with fair coherence and consecutiveness. After them the attempt to hold the scheme together, except in the loosest and most general way, is given up as too troublesome or too confined. The poet . . . ranges unrestrained over the whole field of knowledge and imagination. . . . His poem became an elastic framework, into which he could fit whatever interested him and tempted him to composition. . . . So multi-

farious is the poem, so full of all that he thought or observed or felt that it is really a collection of separate tales and allegories, as much as the Arabian Nights. . . . As a whole it is confusing, but we need not treat it as a whole. . . . We can hardly lose our way in it, for there is no way to lose. . . . It is a wilderness in which we are left to wander. But there may be interest and pleasure in a wilderness, if we are prepared for the wandering. . . . A vein of what are manifestly contemporary allusions breaks across the moral drift of the allegory, with an apparently distinct yet obscured meaning, and one of which it is the work of dissertations to find the key. . . . In Spenser's allegories we are not seldom at a loss to make out what and how much was really intended, amid a maze of overstrained analogies and over-subtle conceits and attempts to hinder a too close and dangerous identification. . . . There is an intentional dislocation of the parts of the story, when they might make it imprudently close in its reflection of facts or resemblance in portraiture. . . . His palaces, landscapes, pageants, feasts, are taken to pieces in all their parts, and all these parts are likened to some other things. The impression remains that he wants a due perception of the absurd, the unnatural, the unnecessary."—*R. W. Church*.

"Like Homer, Spenser is redundant, ingenuous, even childish. He says everything, he puts down reflections which we have made beforehand; he repeats without limit his grand ornamental epithets. . . . We can see that he beholds objects in a beautiful uniform light, with infinite detail, never fearing to see his happy dream change or disappear. . . . His thought expands in vast repeated comparisons, like those of the old Ionic poet. . . . He develops all the ideas which he handles. All his phrases become periods. Instead of compressing, he expands."—*Taine*.

"One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the 'Faery Queene.' We become sick of cardinal

virtues and deadly sins, and long for the society of plain men and women."—*Macaulay*.

"Dryden and many others have complained of intricacy and incoherence in the 'Faery Queene.' The admirers of the poet should not meet this complaint with a denial of the fact; for a fact it is that Spenser does often violate the plain laws of space and time. To maintain coherence prolonged actions must sometimes be supposed to happen in no time; and personages are sometimes present or absent as it suits the poet's convenience, coming and going without remark. The proper excuse is to say the scene is laid 'in the delightful land of Faery,' where perplexity and confusion are as natural as in a dream. The real explanation probably is, that the poet wrote with great facility, and that in 'winging his flight rapidly through the prescribed labyrinth of sweet sounds,' he sometimes sang himself to sleep, and forgot exactly where he was. . . . 'In description,' Campbell says, 'Spenser exhibits nothing of the brief strokes and robust power which characterize the very greatest poets.' It would perhaps be more accurate to say that the brief strokes are supplemented and their abrupt, concentrated effect weakened, or at least softened, by subsequent diffusion. . . . The poet does not leave his conceptions pent up and struggling with repressed force, but expands them into sublime images."—*William Minto*.

"But now the mystic tale, that pleased of yore,  
Can charm an understanding age no more;  
The long-spun allegories fulsome grow,  
While the dull moral lies too plain below."

—*Addison*.

"This poet contains great beauties, a sweet and harmonious versification, easy elocution, a fine imagination. Yet does the perusal of his work become so tedious that one never finishes it from the mere pleasure that it affords. It soon becomes a kind of task-reading, and it requires some effort and resolution

to carry us on to the end of his long performance. Spenser keeps his place upon our shelves, among the classics, but is seldom seen on the table, and there is scarcely an one, if he dare to be ingenuous, but will confess that, notwithstanding all the merit of the poet, he affords an entertainment with which the palate is soon satiated."—*Hume*.

"Superfluosness, though eschewed with a fine instinct by Chaucer in some of his latest works, where the narrative was fullest of action and character, abounded in his others; and, in spite of the classics, it had not been recognized as a fault in Spenser's time, when books were still rare and a writer thought himself bound to pour out all he felt and knew. It accorded also with his genius, and in him it is not an excess of weakness but of will and luxury."—*Leigh Hunt*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Like as the tide, that comes fro' the ocean mayne,  
Flowes up the Shenan with contrarie forse,  
And, over-ruling him in his owne rayne,  
Drives backe the current of his kindly course,  
And makes it seeme to have some other sourse;  
But when the floud is spent, then backe againe  
His borrowed waters forst to redisbourse,  
He sends the sea his owne with double gaine,  
And tribute eke withall as to his souveraine,  
Thus did the battell varie to and fro."

—*The Faery Queene*.

"Whom when the Prince to batteil new addrest  
And threatning high his dreadfull stroke did see,  
His sparkling blade about his head he blest,  
And smote off quite his right leg by the knee,  
That down he tumbled; as an aged tree,  
High growing on the top of rocky clift,  
Whose hartstrings with keene steel nigh hewen be;  
The mightie trunck, halfe rent with ragged rift,  
Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with fearefull drift.



Or as a Castle reared high and round,  
 By subtile engins and malicious slight  
 Is undermined from the lowest ground,  
 And her foundation forst, and feebled quight,  
 At last downe falles : and with her heaped hight  
 Her hastie ruin does more heavie make,  
 And yields it selfe unto the victours might.  
 Such was the Gyaunts fall, that seemed to shake  
 The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare did quake."

—*The Faery Queene.*

"But if I her like ought on earth might read,  
 I would her lyken to a crowne of lillies,  
 Upon a virgin brydes adorned head,  
 With roses dight and goolds and daffadillies ;  
 Or like the circlet of a turtle true,  
 In which all colours of the rainbow bee ;  
 Or like faire Phebes garlond shining new,  
 In which all pure perfection one may see.  
 But vaine it is to thinke, by paragone  
 Of earthly things, to judge of things divine ;  
 Her power, her mercy, her wisdom, none  
 Can deeme, but who the Godhead can define."

—*Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*

**8. Verbal License.**—Spenser has been generally criticised for the liberties that he takes with language. Craik declares that his treatment of words on the occasion of difficulty with his verse is "like nothing that was ever seen unless it might be Hercules breaking the back of the Nemean lion. He gives them any sense and any shape that the case may demand. Sometimes he merely alters a letter or two ; sometimes he twists off the head or tail of the unfortunate vocable altogether." Ben Jonson declared that, in "affecting the ancients," Spenser "writ no language," and Daniel, writing soon after his master, criticises him for singing "in aged accents and untimely words."

"He professes to make language and style suitable to the

'ragged and rustical' rudeness of the shepherds whom he brings on the scene, by making it both archaic and provincial. He found in Chaucer a store of forms and words sufficiently well known to be, with a little help, intelligible and sufficiently out of common use to give the character of antiquity to a poetry which employed them. And from his sojourn in the North he is said to have imported a certain number of local peculiarities which would seem unfamiliar and harsh in the South. . . . The liberty of reviving old forms, of venturing on new and bold phrases, was rightly greater in his time than at a later stage of the language. Many of his words, either invented or preserved, are happy additions; some, which have not taken root in the language, we may regret. But it was a liberty which he abused. He was extravagant and unrestrained in his experiments on language. . . . On his own authority he cuts down, or he alters a word, or he adopts a mere corrupt pronunciation to suit a place in his metre or because he wants a rime. . . . Precedents . . . may no doubt be found for each one of these sacrifices to the necessities of metre or rime in some one or other living dialectic usage or even in printed books. . . . But when they are profusely used, as they are in Spenser, they argue either want of trouble or want of resource. In his impatience he is reckless in making a word he wants; he is reckless in making one word do the duty of another, interchanging actives and passives, transferring epithets from their proper subjects. . . . His own generation felt his license to be extreme, . . . and to us, though students of the language must always find interest in the storehouse of ancient or invented language to be found in Spenser, this mixture of what is obsolete or capriciously new is a bar, and not an unreasonable one, to a frank welcome at first acquaintance."

—*R. W. Church.*

"Avoiding the affectation of refinement [in the 'Shepherd's Calendar'] he falls into the opposite affectation of rustic-

ity; and, by a profusion of obsolete and uncouth expressions, hinders the free movement of his fancy."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He loved 'seldseen, costly' words perhaps too well, and did not always distinguish between mere strangeness and that novelty which is so agreeable as to cheat us with some charm of seeming association. He chooses his language for its rich canorousness rather than for intensity of meaning. . . . He forms English words out of French or Italian ones, sometimes, I think, on a misapprehension of their true meaning; nay, he sometimes makes new ones by unlawfully grafting a scion of Romance on a Teutonic root. . . . His archaisms often needed a glossary even in his own day, but he never endangers his finest passages by any experiments of this kind. . . . Spenser was an epicure in language. . . . His innovations were by no means always happy, as not always according with the genius of the language, and they have therefore not prevailed. . . . His theory . . . of rescuing good archaisms from unwarranted oblivion was excellent, not so his practice of being archaic for the mere sake of escaping from the common and familiar. . . . It may readily be granted that he sometimes 'hunted the letter,' as it was called, out of all cry."—*Lowell*.

"A great deal has been written on this—comments, at least, of the unfavorable kind, generally resolving themselves into the undoubtedly true remarks that Spenser's dialect is not the dialect of any actual place or time, that it is an artificial 'poetic diction' made up of Chaucer and of Northern dialect, of classicisms and of foreign words and miscellaneous archaisms from no matter where. No doubt it is. But . . . there was no actually spoken or ordinarily written tongue in Spenser's day which could claim to be 'Queen's English.' . . . In its remoteness without grotesqueness, in its lavish color, in its abundance of matter for every kind of cadence and sound-effect, it is exactly suited to the subject, the writer, and the verse."—*George Saintsbury*.

“He was probably seduced into a certain license of expression by the difficulty of filling up the moulds of his complicated rhymed stanza from the limited resources of his native language. . . . Spenser is the poet of our waking dreams; and he has invented a language of his own for them.”—*William Hazlitt*.

“Intentionally archaic in his diction, he heightened the stature of English as a poetic language, and raised it to a pitch of exaltation which had not previously been approached, and has hardly since been rivalled by the few noblest among his successors.”—*W. M. Rossetti*.

“He is enamoured of it [the poetic land] even to its very language; he revives the old words, the expressions of the Middle Ages, the style of Chaucer.”—*Taine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

HOBBINOL.—“Diggon Davie! I bidde her god day;  
Or Diggon her is, or I missaye.”

DIGGON.—“Her was her, while it was daye-light,  
But now her is a most wretched wight;  
For day that was, is wightly \* past,  
And now at earst the dirke night doth hast.”

HOBBINOL.—“Diggon, areede, who has thee so dight?  
Never I wist thee in so poore a plight.  
Where is the fayre flock thou was wont to leade?  
Or bene they chaffred,† or a mischief dead?”

. . . . .

DIGGON.—“Hobbin, ah Hobbin! I curse the stounde  
That ever I cast to have lorne this ground:  
Wel-away the while I was so fonde ‡  
To leave the good that I had in hande,  
In hope of better that was uncouth!  
So lost the Dogge the flesh in his mouth.

\* Quickly.

† Sold.

‡ Foolish.

My seely sheepe (ah, seely sheepe !)  
 That here by there I whilome used to keepe,  
 All were they lustye, as thou didst see,  
 Bene all sterved with pyne and penuree ;  
 Hardly my selfe escaped thilke payne,  
 Driven for neede to come home agayne."

—*The Shepheards Calendar.*

" The soveraine weede betwixt two marbles playne,  
 She pounded small, and did in pieces bruise ;  
 And then atween her lily handes twain  
 Into his wound the juice thereof did scruze. . . .  
 And after having searched the intuse deep,  
 She with her scarf did bind the wound, from cold to keepe."

—*The Faery Queene.*

" Ensamble of his wondrous faculty,  
 Behold the boyling bathes in Cairbadon,  
 Which seeth with secret fire eternally,  
 And in their entrailles, full of quick brimston,  
 Nourish the flames which they are warmed upon."

—*The Faery Queene.*

**9. Flattery—Adulation.**—"His disposition was soft and yielding ; and, to honor a friend or propitiate a patron, he did not hesitate to make his verse a vehicle of flattery as well as of truth. . . . The flattery of Queen Elizabeth is so gross that the wonder is she did not behead him for irony instead of pensioning him for panegyric. The Queen's hair was red ; and Spenser, like the other poets of his day, is too loyal to permit the ideal head of beauty to wear any locks but those which are golden."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"He had already too well caught the trick of flattery—flattery in a degree almost inconceivable to us—which the fashions of the time and the queen's strange self-deceit exacted from the loyalty and enthusiasm of Englishmen. . . . Under this head comes a feature which the 'charity of history' may lead us to treat as simple exaggeration, but which

often suggests something less pardonable, in the great characters, political or literary, of Elizabeth's reign. This was the gross, shameless, lying flattery paid to the Queen. . . . It was no worship of a secluded and distant object of loyalty; the men who thus flattered knew perfectly well, often by painful experience, what Elizabeth was; able, indeed, high-spirited, successful, but ungrateful to her servants, capricious, vain, ill-tempered, unjust, and in her old age ugly. And yet the Gloriana of the 'Faery Queene,' the empress of all nobleness—Belphoebe, the Princess of all sweetness and beauty, Britomart, the armed votaress of all purity, Mercilla, the lady of all compassion and grace, were but the reflections of the language in which it was then agreed upon by some of the greatest of Englishmen to speak, and to be supposed to think, of the Queen."—*R. W. Church.*

"Thus [by the stipend bestowed on him by the Queen] he procured the leisure to exercise his pen—'the vacant head which verse demands'—but he incurred at the same time the obligations of a court poet, which, though they may have sat lightly on the shoulders of a loyal subject and an humble off-shoot of the aristocracy, by nature prone to admiration, led him sometimes into servile compliances and into a habit of adulation. . . . And, speaking more generally, we do not love to see our 'sage, serious Spenser' turn his great moral song into a venal eulogy of the great, committing, as it were, the ineffectual simony of selling riches in the Temple of Fame. But . . . flattery was a custom and almost a necessity among poets."—*Professor Child.*

"The age of Elizabeth was, indeed, 'an age of adulation'—and Edmund Spenser Adulator-general to the Court. But blame him not too severely, we implore you, for following the 'custom of the time.' "—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ And thou, O fayrest Princesse under sky !  
 In this fayre mirrhour maist behold thy face,  
 And thine own realmes in lond of Faery,  
 And in this antique ymage thy great auncestry.  
 The which, O ! pardon me thus to enfold  
 In cover vele, and wrap in shadowes light,  
 That feeble eyes your glory may behold,  
 Which ells could not endure those beames bright,  
 But would bee dazled with exceeding light.”

—*The Faery Queene.*

“ The soverayne beauty which I doo admyre,  
 Witnesse the world how worthy to be prayzed !  
 The light whereof hath kindled heavenly fyre  
 In my fraile spirit, by her from basenesse rayسد ;  
 That, being now with her huge brightnesse dazed,  
 Base thing I can no more endure to view :  
 But, looking still on her I stand amazed  
 At wondrous sight of so celestially hew.  
 So, when my tounge would speak her praises dew,  
 It stopped is with thoughts astonishment ;  
 And, when my pen would write her titles true,  
 It ravisht is with fancies wonderment ;  
 Yet in my hart I then both speake and write  
 The wonder that my wit cannot endite.”

—*Amoretti, or Sonnets.*

“ In the highest place,  
 Urania [Countess of Pembroke], sister unto Astrofell,  
 In whose brave mynd, as in a golden cofer,  
 All heavenly gifts and riches lockèd are ;  
 More rich than pearles of Ynd, or gold of Opher,  
 And in her sex more wonderfull and rare.  
 Ne lesse praise worthie I Theana [Countess of Warwick] read,  
 Whose goodly beames though they be overr-dight  
 With mourning stole of carefull wydowhead,  
 Yet through that darksome vale do glister bright ;

She is the well of bountie and brave mynd,  
 Excelling most in glorie and great light :  
 She is the ornament of womankind,  
 And courts chief garlond with all vertues dight."

—*Colin Clout's Come Home Againe.*

**10. Pictorial Power.**—"Nothing else [than the Spenserian stanza] could adapt itself so perfectly to the endless series of vignettes and dissolving views which the poet delights in giving. . . . The endless, various, brightly-colored, softly and yet distinctly outlined pictures rise and pass before the eyes and vanish without a break, without a jar, softer than sleep and as continuous, gayer than the rainbow and as undiscoverably connected with any obvious cause."—*George Saintsbury.*

"It was this wondrous and various troop of ideal shapes, palpable to his own eye and domesticated in his own heart, that he sent forth, in an endless succession of pictures, through the magical pages of the 'Faery Queene.'"—*E. P. Whipple.*

"He so bordered it [the 'Faery Queene'] with brightly-colored fancies, he so often filled whole pages and crowded the text hard in others with the gay frolics of his pencil, that, as in the Grimani missal, the holy function of the book is forgotten in the ecstasy of its adornment. . . . The true use of him is as a gallery of pictures which we visit as the mood takes us, and where we spend an hour or two at a time, long enough to sweeten our perceptions, not so long as to clog them."—*Lowell.*

"We shall nowhere find more airy and expansive images of visionary things, a sweeter tone of sentiment, or a finer flush in the colors of language than in this Rubens of English poetry."—*Thomas Campbell.*

"Is it possible to refuse credence to a man who paints things for us with such accurate details and in such lovely colors? Here with a dash of his pen he describes a forest for you; and are you not instantly in it with him? Beech trees



with their silvery stems; 'loftie trees iclad with sommer's pride, did spred so broad that heaven's light did hide;' rays of light tremble on the bark and shine on the ground, on the reddening ferns and low bushes, which, suddenly smitten with the luminous track, glisten and glimmer. Footsteps are scarcely heard on the thick beds of heaped leaves; and at distant intervals, on the tall herbage, drops of dew are sparkling. . . . At every bend in the alley, at every change of light, a stanza, a word reveals a landscape or an apparition. It is morning, the white dawn gleams faintly through the trees; bluish vapors veil the horizon, and vanish in the smiling air; the springs tremble and murmur faintly amongst the mosses, and on high the poplar leaves begin to stir and flutter like the wings of butterflies. . . . In every book we see strange processions pass by, allegorical and picturesque shows, like those which were then displayed at the courts of princes; now a masquerade of Cupid, now of the Rivers, now of the Months, now of the Vices. . . . Here are finished pictures, true and complete, composed with a painter's feeling, with choice of tints and outlines; our eyes are delighted by them. . . . The poet, here and throughout, is a colorist and an architect."—*Taine*.

"I think that if Spenser had not been a great poet he would have been a great painter, and in that case there is ground for believing that England would have possessed—and in the person of one man—her Claude, her Annibal Caracci, her Correggio, her Titian, her Rembrandt, perhaps even her Raphael. I suspect that if Spenser's history were better known we should find that he was a passionate student of pictures, a haunter of the collections of his friends, Essex and Leicester. . . . Spenser emulated the Raphaels and Titians in a profusion of pictures, many of which are here taken from their walls. They give the poet's poet a claim to a new title—that of Poet of the Painters."—*Leigh Hunt*.

"In reading his descriptions, one can hardly avoid being

reminded of Rubens' allegorical pictures. . . . Nobody but Rubens could have painted the fancy of Spenser ; and he could not have given the sentiment, the airy dream that hovers over it."—*William Hazlitt*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" A little lowly hermitage it was,  
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,  
Far from resort of people that did pas  
In traveill to and froe ; a little wyde  
There was an holy chappell edifyde,  
Wherein the hermite dewly wont to say  
His holy thinges each morne and eventyde  
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,  
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway."  
—*The Faery Queene*.

" Soone after this I saw on th' other side,  
A curious Coffer made of Heben wood,  
That in it did most precious treasure hide,  
Exceeding all this baser world's good :  
Yet through the overflowing of the flood  
It almost drowned was, and done to nought,  
That sight thereof much griev'd my pensive thought.

At length, when most in perill it was brought,  
Two Angels, downe descending with swift flight,  
Out of the swelling streame it lightly caught,  
And twixt their blessed armes it carried quight  
Above the reach of anie living sight :  
So now it is transform'd into that starre,  
In which all heavenly treasures lockèd are."  
—*The Ruines of Time*.

" Here also playing on the grassy greene,  
Woodgods and Satyres and swift Dryades,  
With many fairies oft were dauncing seene.  
Not so much did Dan Orpheus repressè

The streames of Hebrus with his songs, I weene,  
As that faire troupe of woodie goddesses  
Staied thee, (O Peneus ! ) powring foorth to thee,  
From cheereful lookes great mirth and gladsome glee.

The verie nature of the place, resounding  
With gentle murmure of the breathing ayre,  
A pleasant bowre with all delight abounding  
In the fresh shadowe did for them prepayre,  
To rest their limbs with wearines redounding.  
For first the high palme trees with braunches faire  
Out of the lowly vallies did arise,  
And shoote up their heads into the skyes."

—*Virgils Gnat.*

## MILTON, 1608-1674.

**Biographical Outline.**—John Milton, born December 9, 1608, in Bread Street, Cheapside, London; father a scrivener—a man of scholarly and musical attainments; Milton is first taught by a private tutor, one Thomas Young; he enters St. Paul's School not later than 1620; is passionately devoted to study, reading till midnight regularly, while yet a child, and thus early injuring his eyesight; he learns Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and some Hebrew; is a poet at ten, and is devoted to Spenser's "Faery Queene;" he writes two paraphrases of the Psalms before he is fifteen; enters Christ's College, Cambridge, February 12, 1624-25, as a pensioner, and is matriculated on the 9th of the following April; he keeps every term at Cambridge, taking the degree of A.B. in March, 1629, and A.M. in July, 1632; he is harshly treated (tradition says whipped) by his tutor, one Chappel; is highly respected at the university for his scholarship; corresponds in Latin with his friends Diodati, Young, and Gill, while at Cambridge; writes several Latin poems and "*Prolusiones Oratoria*" (published in 1674) as college exercises; writes his ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" at Christmas, 1629, and his sonnet to Shakespeare in 1630; expresses scorn for the dramatic performances seen at Cambridge, the narrow theological studies of his fellows, and their ignorance of philosophy; is nicknamed "the lady" at college because of his long, flowing locks, his personal beauty, and his sensitiveness; becomes a good fencer, but holds himself austere aloof from most student society; develops great hostility to scholasticism.

Even while at Cambridge Milton already considered himself as dedicated to the utterance of great thoughts and to the

strictest chastity, on the ground that "he who would write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem;" Milton is educated with a view to taking holy orders, but, on leaving Cambridge, he decides to postpone (but not to abandon) that course; he is alienated from the Church by the intolerant policy of Laud; he soon decides to devote himself exclusively to literature, and settles with his father at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, twelve miles from London, where he resides from 1632 to 1638; while at Horton, Milton visits London frequently, to obtain instruction in music and mathematics, and writes his "*L'Allegro*" and "*Il Penseroso*;" he writes also his masque "Arcades," for the Countess-dowager of Derby, and "Comus" for the Earl of Bridgewater (performed at Ludlow Castle in September, 1634, and published by Milton's musical collaborator, Henry Lawes, without acknowledging Milton's authorship); Milton writes "Lycidas" in November, 1637, on the death of his friend Edward King.

He starts in April, 1638, on a Continental tour, taking a servant and being liberally supplied with money by his father; he makes brief visits to Paris, Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, and Pisa, and spends two months in Florence and two more in Rome; thence to Naples, where he learns of the threatened revolution, and determines to return home, "lest I should be travelling abroad while my countrymen were fighting for liberty;" he stops two more months at Florence on his way homeward, and returns by way of Ferrara, Bologna, Venice, Verona, Milan, and (probably) the Simplon; he spends some time in Geneva, and reaches England *via* Paris in July, 1639; while abroad he offends the Italians by his strict morality and his outspoken attacks on popery, but is received and honored by many eminent persons, including Grotius, the Academicians of Florence, Galileo, and others; during his tour he writes five Italian sonnets and a canzone; on his return he takes lodgings in a tailor's house in St. Bride's Churchyard, London, and receives

there his sister's two sons (aged eight and nine) as pupils; soon afterward he takes "a pretty garden-house" in Aldersgate Street; he establishes for himself and his pupils a régime of "hard study and spare diet," allowing himself but one "gaudy day" a month, and carrying out, with his pupils, the methods of education described in his tractate on that subject; in 1643 he takes more pupils, and writes his Latin idyll "*Epi-taphium Damonis*;" he sketches the plan of a poem on Arthur, draws up a list of ninety-nine subjects for other poems, and already contemplates a poem on "Paradise Lost;" he enters political discussion by publishing, anonymously, in the summer of 1641, three pamphlets—"Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England," "Prelatical Episcopacy," and "Animadversions upon the Remonstrance Defence," all three being vehement attacks on the episcopacy and scathing replies to the pleas of its adherents.

In February, 1641-42, Milton publishes under his own name "The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelacy;" in April, 1642, he publishes his "Apology," defending himself against a slanderous attack by Bishop Hall and replying most vehemently in kind; he declines to enter the army at the outbreak of the civil war in 1642, on the ground that his mind is stronger than his body, and is therefore more useful to the cause of liberty; on May 21, 1643, after a surprisingly short courtship, Milton marries Mary Powell, aged seventeen, daughter of a Cavalier landholder, residing at Forest Hill, Oxfordshire, who had long owed Milton a debt of £312; soon afterward, Milton's father, driven by the Royalists from his home at Reading, comes to live with Milton; Milton's wife soon becomes dissatisfied with the dulness of his home and the crying of his oft-beaten pupils, and Milton finds his wife stupid; so she returns to her father after a month's trial of "a philosophical life," promising to return at the ensuing Michaelmas; she refuses to return; Milton's messenger is uncivilly treated by her family, and then (within

three months of his marriage) Milton writes his tractate on "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," in which he justifies divorce on the ground of incompatibility or of mutual consent, especially if there be no children, and proposes sweeping changes in the marriagelaws; the tractate makes him notorious, and he is bitterly attacked, especially after his second and acknowledged edition of the tractate in February, 1643-44; he publishes a second pamphlet on divorce in July, 1644; influenced by the demand that his books be burned and by the threat of prosecution because he had not obtained a proper license from the Stationers' Company, Milton writes his "*Areopagitica*," published November 24, 1644, and generally acknowledged to be the best of his prose works; he publishes two more pamphlets on divorce in 1644-45, and proposes to apply his principles by marrying the daughter of one Dr. Davis, a lady immortalized in Milton's sonnet to "Lady Margaret;" meantime his wife's parents lose their property, and she begs his pardon and asks to be received again; Milton reluctantly consents, and they take a house in the Barbican (a street near Aldersgate Street) large enough to accommodate his increasing number of pupils; by Mary Powell, Milton has four children: Anne, Mary, John (who died in infancy), and Deborah; Mrs. Milton died in 1652.

Milton publishes the first collected edition of his poems in 1645, placing the Latin and the English verses on separate pages; his pupils increase in number, and include several sons of prominent families; in the autumn of 1647 Milton removes to a house in High Holborn and gives up teaching; it is supposed that he inherited a competency from his father, who died in March, 1646-47; in his sonnet to Fairfax and in other writings he expresses deep sympathy with the Puritan cause; he writes paraphrases of seventeen of the Psalms and a "History of Britain;" immediately after the execution of Charles I., he publishes a pamphlet on "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," and is consequently invited to become Latin

Secretary to the Council of State; he accepts, and takes office March 15, 1648-49, at a salary of about £730 a year; his duties are to translate the foreign despatches of the government into dignified Latin, to examine papers found on suspected persons, and to act as a licenser of books; he is directed by the government to answer the "*Eikon Basilike*," a book then popularly supposed to have been written by Charles I., in defence of his character and position, but really written by the Bishop of Exeter; Milton publishes his answer October 6, 1649, under the title "*Eikonoklastes*," of which a French translation is ordered made by the Council of State; Milton is ordered by the Council, in January, 1650, to reply to Salmasius, a professor at Leyden—"a man of enormous reading and no judgment"—whom the Scottish Presbyterians had invited to write in defence of their theological and political position, and who had accordingly published, in 1649, the "*Defensio Regio pro Carolo I.*;" Milton's reply, "*Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*," appears in March, 1650, and he refuses £100 voted him by the Council as payment for the work; he completes the destruction of his eyesight by overwork on his "Defence;" in March, 1652; he is attacked with gross personal abuse by one Peter du Moulin in a book entitled "*Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cælum*," dedicated to Alexander More, formerly professor of Greek at Geneva, and attributed to More by Milton; he is ordered by the Council to reply to the "*Clamor*," and publishes his answer in May, 1654, under the title "*Defensio Secunda*," a book full of savage abuse, but containing, also, valuable autobiographical passages and an apostrophe to Cromwell; More replies, denying the authorship of the "*Clamor*," and Milton writes a third book, "*Pro Se Defensio*," in August, 1655.

While Latin secretary he occupies for a time chambers at Whitehall; later he removes to another "pretty garden-house," afterward 19 York Street, subsequently occupied successively by Bentham, James Mill, and Hazlitt, and demolished in



1657; he lives here till the Restoration; he is assisted in his duties as secretary by Andrew Marvell and others; in 1655, apparently because of his blindness, Milton's salary is reduced to £150 a year, which was to be paid during his life, and was soon increased to £200; on November 12, 1656, he marries Catherine Woodcock, by whom he has one child, but mother and child die in February, 1658; Milton is said to have had an allowance first from Parliament and afterward from Cromwell for the maintenance of a "weekly table" for the entertainment of eminent foreigners who came to England especially to see him; in 1659 he publishes two pamphlets favoring a purely voluntary ecclesiastical system, and in 1660 one proposing that Parliament make itself perpetual; in April, 1660, he writes "Brief Notes," attacking a royalist sermon; at the Restoration Milton conceals himself in a friend's house in Bartholomew Close; on June 16, 1660, it is ordered by the Commons that his "*Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*" be burned by the common hangman and that he be indicted and taken into custody; he is arrested during the summer, but is ordered released at the next session on the payment of fees amounting to £150; the Indemnity Act frees him from all legal consequences of his actions; the lenient treatment of Milton was probably due to the efforts of his friends Marvell and D'Avenant, for the latter of whom he had formerly entreated when D'Avenant was in danger of execution; on regaining his liberty, Milton takes a house in Holborn, and soon afterward removes to Jewett Street.

By the changes attendant on the Restoration his income is reduced from £500 to about £200 a year; Mrs. Powell, mother of Milton's first wife, attempts to obtain some of his property, and apparently succeeds in part; on February 24, 1662-63, he marries Elizabeth Minshull, and soon afterward removes to a small house with a garden, in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, where he resides till death, if we except a reported short sojourn as a lodger in the house of the bookseller

Millington ; during the plague of 1665 he retires to Chalfont St. Giles, where "a pretty box" was taken for him by the Quaker, Thomas Ellwood ; Ellwood had previously formed a friendship with Milton, had read Latin books to him, received from him in the "box" at Chalfont the manuscript of "Paradise Lost," and suggested a poem on "Paradise Regained ;" the house at Chalfont is still preserved (1898) as a public memorial of Milton ; he begins "Paradise Lost" in 1658 and finishes it in 1663 ; he loses his house in Bread Street (inherited from his father) in the great fire of 1666 ; on April 27, 1667, Milton sells the copyright of "Paradise Lost" to Samuel Simmons, the terms being that Milton is to receive £5 down and £5 additional for each of the first three editions of not more than 1,500 copies each ; he receives his second £5 in April, 1669, and these £10 are all he ever received personally for "Paradise Lost ;" in 1680 Milton's widow sells to Simmons a perpetual copyright of the book for £8 ; 4,500 copies were sold by 1688 ; Dryden first appreciated its value, saying of Milton : "This man cuts us all out, and the ancients, too ;" with Milton's permission, Dryden puts "Paradise Lost" into a drama in rhyme, under the title "A Heroick Opera," published in 1674 ; Milton is much visited, in his later years, by foreigners and men of rank ; "Paradise Lost" is translated into German and into Latin in 1682 ; Milton publishes "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" together in 1671, and could never bear to hear "Paradise Regained" pronounced inferior to his first epic ; in 1669 he publishes his Latin grammar and his "History of Britain," written long before ; in 1673 he puts forth a new edition of his early poems ; he suffers during his last years from the gout and from unpleasant domestic relations ; he dies at his house in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, November 8, 1674, leaving £100 each to his "undutiful children," and £600 to his widow.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

**I. Sublimity—Majesty.**—"This is the quality which the poverty of our language tries to express by the words solemnity, gravity, majesty, nobility, loftiness, and which, name it as we may, we all feel in reading 'Paradise Lost.' His rage, when almost delirious, is always a Miltonic rage; it is grand, sublime, terrible; mingled with the scurrillities of theological brawl are passages of the noblest English ever written. . . . The elevation is communicated to us not by the dogma or deliverance but by the sympathy. We catch the contagion of the poet's mental attitude. Milton's mind was full to overflowing with vague conceptions of the lofty, the vast, and the sublime."—*Mark Pattison*.

"The author seems to think but in images, and these images are grand and proud as his own soul. . . . There are moments when, shaking the dust of argument from off him, the poet suddenly bursts forth and carries us off on the torrent of an incomparable eloquence. It is poetic enthusiasm, a flood of images shed over the dull and arid theme, a wing-stroke which sweeps us high above piddling controversy. . . . The poetry of Milton is the very essence of poetry. There is something indescribably heroic and magnificent which overflows from Milton, even when he is engaged in the most miserable discussions. . . . The eloquence is now sad, tender, and again wild and tempestuous as the hurricane of heaven."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"From one end of 'Paradise Lost' to the other, Milton is, in his diction and rhythm, constantly a great artist in the great style. . . . In our race are thousands of readers, presently there will be millions, who know not a word of Greek or Latin, and will never learn those languages. If this host of readers are ever to gain any sense of the power and charm of the great poets of antiquity, their way to gain it is

not through the translation of the ancients but through the original poetry of Milton, who has the like power and charm because he has the like grand style."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"The style is always great. On the whole it is the greatest in the whole range of English poetry, so great that when once we have come to honor and love it, it so subdues the judgment that judgment can with difficulty do its work with temperance. . . . It lifts the low, gives life to the commonplace, dignifies even the vulgar, and makes us endure that which is heavy and dull. We catch ourselves admiring things not altogether worthy of admiration because the robe they wear is so royal. Splendid is the poetry of 'Comus.' Even when the imagination in 'Comus' falls it is made more remarkable by the soaring strength of his loftier flight and by the majesty of the verse. . . . His style is so spacious and so majestic. . . . There is majesty in the conduct of thought and a music in the majesty which fills it with solemn beauty; . . . and this fulfills the ultimate need of a grand style in being the easy and necessary expression of the very character and nature of the man. . . . The majesty and the beauty of 'Paradise Lost' are beyond praise. . . . Throughout, the grandeur of the picture increases with the grandeur of the thought. . . . Nothing can be nobler in thought and verse than Adam's great hymn of praise."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"The first two books of 'Paradise Lost' are like two massy pillars of solid gold. . . . The strength is equal to the magnitude of the conception. . . . It contains the most perfect example of mingled pathos and sublimity. . . . He adorns and dignifies his subject to the utmost: he surrounds it with every possible association of beauty or grandeur, whether moral, intellectual, or physical."—*William Hazlitt*.

"His name is almost identified with sublimity. He is, in truth, the sublimest of men. He rises, . . . by a native

tendency and a god-like instinct, to the contemplation of objects of grandeur and awfulness. . . . The grandeur of Milton's mind has thrown some shade over his milder beauties. . . . The first two books of 'Paradise Lost' stand pre-eminent for sublimity."—*W. E. Channing.*

"As of old, he went out of this lower world in search of the sublime. . . . The sublimity of Milton's scenery raises our mind. . . . The sublime is born into the poet. . . . In his Christian and moral verse he aims at the sublime because the sublime is the work of enthusiastic reason."—*Taine.*

"Among Milton's many great attributes, his mastery of the sublime is the one which has probably received the most frequent laudation."—*W. M. Rossetti.*

"His lyrical poems, move they ever so softly, step loftily and with something of an epic air. . . . His epic is the first in sublime effect."—*Mrs. Browning.*

"Sublimity is the general and prevailing quality of 'Paradise Lost'—sublimity variously modified, sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative."—*Samuel Johnson.*

"Milton's chief talent, and indeed his distinguishing excellence, lies in the sublimity of his thoughts. . . . He has made the sublimity of his style equal to that of his sentiments. As Milton's genius was wonderfully turned to the sublime, his subject is the noblest that could have entered into the thought of man. . . . I do not know anything in 'Paradise Lost' more sublime than the description where the Messiah is represented at the head of his angels as looking down into chaos, calming its confusion, riding into the midst of it, and drawing the first outline of the creation. . . . There is something sublime in this part of 'Paradise Lost,' where the author describes the great period of time filled with so many glorious circumstances."—*Addison.*

"It is certain that this author, when in a happy mood and employed on a noble subject, is the most wonderfully sublime



of any poet in any language, Homer and Lucretius and Tasso not excepted."—*Hume*.

"His more elaborate passages have the multitudinous roll of thunder."—*Lowell*.

"The speeches [in 'Comus'] must be read as majestic soliloquies; and he who so reads them will be enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity, and their music."—*Macaulay*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Up he rode

Follow'd with acclamation and the sound  
Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tuned  
Angelic harmonies; the earth, the air  
Resounded, thou remember'st, for thou heard'st;  
The heavens and all the constellations rung,  
The planets in their station listening stood,  
While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.  
Open, ye heavens, your living doors; let in  
The great Creator, from His work return'd  
Magnificent, His six days' work, a world:  
Open, and henceforth oft; for God will deign  
To visit oft the dwellings of just men."

—*Paradise Lost*.

"Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven, first-born,  
Of the Eternal coeternal beam,  
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,  
And never but in unapproached light  
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt but in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.  
Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,  
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the Sun,  
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice  
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest  
The rising world of waters dark and deep,  
Won from the void and formless infinite."

—*Paradise Lost*.

"Ring out ye crystal spheres!  
 Once bless our human ears,  
 (If ye have power to touch our senses so)  
 And let your silver chime  
 Move in melodious time,  
 And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow.  
 And with your nine-fold harmony  
 Make up full consort to the angelic symphony."  
*—On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.*

**2. Harmony—Concord.**—"Tennyson calls Milton the 'God-gifted organ-voice of England.' The voice of England pealing in the ears of all the world for all time. Swept on the flood of those great harmonies, the mighty hosts of angels clash together in heaven-shaking conflict. But it is the same full tide of music which flows down in sweetest lingering cadence to wander through the cool groves and fragrant valleys of Paradise. . . . Both Milton and Tennyson have been led by their study of classic poets to understand that . . . the best music is made by the concord rather than the unison of sounds."—*Henry van Dyke.*

"The truth is that Milton was a harmonist rather than a melodist. . . . He touched the keys in the epical organ-pipes of our various language that have never since felt the strain of such prevailing breath. It was in the larger movements of metre that Milton was great and original."—*Lowell.*

"He has not only imagery and vocabulary but the period, the great musical phrase, a little long . . . but swaying all with it, in its superb undulation."—*Edmond Scherer.*

"Nature had endowed him in no ordinary degree with that most exquisite of her gifts, the ear and the passion for harmony."—*David Masson.*

"The public has long agreed as to the merit of the most remarkable passages [of 'Paradise Lost'], the incomparable harmony of the numbers and the excellence of that style, which no rival has been able to equal and no parodist to degrade;

which display in their highest perfection the idiomatic powers of the English tongue, and to which every ancient and every modern language has contributed something of grace, of energy, or of music."—*Macaulay*.

"There is a music in Milton's majesty that fills it with solemn beauty. The work of the higher imagination is felt as the shaping power in the poem, as the Orphean music which has harmonized and built them into that unity which is the highest and last demand of art. . . . One of the charms of 'Lycidas' is its solemn undertone rising like a chant. . . . The lines Milton gives to Paradise—in metrical weight and balance perfect—are equal to the height of loveliness he wishes to hold, and rise at the end—when we would think music and loveliness could be no more—into fuller beauty and more enchanted music."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"The sound of his lines is moulded into the expression of the sentiment almost of every image. They rise or fall, pause or hurry rapidly on, with exquisite art but without the least trick or affectation. . . . His verse floats up and down as if it had wings."—*William Hazlitt*.

"The harmony of Milton's verse depends greatly upon alliteration. . . . In the melody of 'Comus' there is youthful freshness. . . . Like Vogel, he is unerringly and unremittingly harmonious. . . . Music is the element in which his genius lives."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"All the treasures of sweet and solemn sound are at his command. . . . Words flow through his poetry in a full stream of harmony. . . . This power does not belong to his musical ear but to his soul. . . . It is the gift or exercise of genius, which has power to impress itself on whatever it touches, and finds or frames in sounds, motions, and material forms correspondences and harmonies with its own fervid thoughts and feelings."—*W. E. Channing*.

"Milton's mastery of the sublime has probably received the most frequent and most emphatic laudation, but his

power over language, in its beauty and majesty, his mastery of form and of verse, its music and loveliness, its resources and charms, dignity, austerity, and awe, form the most marked distinctions of Milton."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"Milton's hymns rolled with the slowness of a measured song and the gravity of a declamation."—*Taine*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"High on a throne of royal state, which far  
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,  
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,  
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised  
To that bad eminence; and from despair  
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires  
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue  
Vain war with Heaven, and by success untaught  
His proud imaginations thus displayed."

—*Paradise Lost*.

"The oracles are dumb,  
No voice or hideous hum  
Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving.  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine  
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.  
No nightly trance or breathéd spell  
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell."

—*On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

"But let my due feet never fail  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowéd roof,  
With antic pillars massy proof  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light."

—*Il Penseroso*.

**3. Love of Natural Beauty—Picturesqueness.**—  
Certain critics have called Milton a poet of books rather than

of nature; but this judgment is sustained neither by the majority of commentators nor by his works. In a letter addressed to Diodati, in 1637, Milton writes: "What God has resolved concerning me, I know not, but this I know at least—He has instilled into me a vehement love of the beautiful. Not with so much labour, as the fables have it, is Ceres said to have sought her daughter Proserpine as I am wont to seek day and night for this idea of the beautiful through all the forms and faces of things."

"There is a more potent and lasting charm in Milton's description of the beautiful than in the description of the sublime. The art of landscape poetry, I take it, consists in this: the choice and description of such actual images of external nature as are capable of being grouped and colored by a dominant idea or feeling. Of this art the most perfect masters are Milton and Tennyson. . . . Not less remarkable is the identity of spirit in Tennyson and Milton in their delicate yet wholesome sympathy with Nature, their perception of the relation of her moods and aspects to the human heart."  
—*Henry Van Dyke.*

"His description of nature shows a free and bold hand. . . . With a few strong and delicate touches he impresses, as it were, his own mind on the scenes which he would describe, and kindles the imagination of the gifted reader to clothe them with the same radiant hues under which they appeared to him. . . . We have thought so much of Milton's strength and sublimity that we have ceased to recognize . . . that he . . . is by nature the supreme lover of beauty. . . . No poems possess more pure love of beauty than '*Il Penseroso*,' '*L'Allegro*' and other of Milton's early poems."—*Edward Dowden.*

"He does look at nature, but he sees her through books. Natural impressions are received from without, but always in those forms of beautiful speech in which the poets of all ages have clothed them. . . . Milton's attitude toward Nature

is . . . that of a poet who feels its total influences too powerfully to dissect it. He is not concerned to register the facts and phenomena of nature but to convey the impressions they make on a sensitive soul."—*Mark Pattison*.

"However his poems are involved, Milton has always a simple motive. And this is one reason why children as well as others understand and have pleasure in them. The picturesqueness of the scenes, the clear-cut vivid outlines of the things described—and this is also a constant excellence of Milton, though he sometimes wilfully spoils it by digression—is also a source of delight to young and old."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"We hear the pealing organ, but the incense on the altars is also there, and the statues of the gods are ranged around. The ear indeed predominates over the eye, because it is more immediately affected, and because the language of music blends more immediately with and forms a more natural accompaniment to the variable and indefinite associations of ideas conveyed by words. But where the associations of the imagination are not the principal thing, the individual object is given by Milton with equal force and beauty. He refines on his descriptions of beauty, loading sweets on sweets till the sense aches with them. . . . He describes objects of which he has only read in books with the vividness of actual observation. He makes words tell as pictures."—*William Hazlitt*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Sabrina fair,  
Listen where thou art sitting  
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,  
In twisted braids of lilies knitting  
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;  
Listen for dear honour's sake,  
Goddess of the silver lake ;  
Listen and save,

Listen and appear to us,  
In name of great Oceanus ;

. . . . .

By all the nymphs that nightly dance  
Upon thy streams with wily glance,  
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head  
From thy coral-paven bed,  
Till thou our summons answered have  
Listen and save."—*Comus*.

"On either side  
Acanthus and each odorous bushy shrub  
Fenced up the verdant wall ; each beauteous flower,  
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamin  
Reared high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought  
Mosaic ; under foot the violet,  
Crocus, and hyacinth with rich inlay  
Brodered the ground, more coloured than with stone  
Of costliest emblem."—*Paradise Lost*.

"Betwixt them lawns or level downs and flocks  
Grazing the tender herb were interposed,  
Or palmy hillock ; or the flowery lap  
Of some irrigous valley spread her store,  
Flowers of all hue and without thorn the rose ;  
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves  
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine  
Lays forth her purple grape and creeps  
Luxuriant ; meanwhile murmuring waters fall  
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in the lake,  
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned  
Her crystal mirror holds, their streams unite.  
The birds their quire apply ; airs, vernal airs,  
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune  
The trembling leaves."—*Paradise Lost*.

**4. Vastness—Amplitude.**—This quality is nearly related to the majesty of Milton's style, already discussed, and is continually found in connection with it ; and yet the two

qualities are not identical ; for we may find numerous passages where the treatment is grand and sonorous while the element of spaciousness is not present. On the other hand, however, we seldom if ever have spaciousness without grandeur.

“ His is the large utterance of the early gods. . . . He showed from the first that larger style which was to be his peculiar distinction. . . . He loved phrases of towering port, in which every member dilated stands like Teneriffe or Atlas. . . . In reading ‘Paradise Lost’ one has a feeling of vastness. You float under an illimitable sky, brimmed with sunshine or hung with constellations ; the abysses of space are about you ; you hear the cadenced surges of an unseen ocean ; thunder mutters around the horizon ; and if the scene changes, it is with an elemental movement like the shifting of mighty winds. . . . There are no such vistas and avenues of verse as his. In reading ‘Paradise Lost’ one has a feeling of spaciousness which no other poet gives. . . . Whatever he touches swells and towers.”—*Lowell*.

“ Milton’s delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility ; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery into worlds where only imagination can travel. . . . His great excellence is amplitude. . . . He had accustomed his imagination to unrestrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extensive.”—*Samuel Johnson*.

“ Milton needs the grand and infinite ; he lavishes them. His eyes are only content in limitless space, and he produces colossuses to fill it. Such is Satan wallowing on the surges of the livid sea. Milton’s hell is vast and vague. . . . He wanted a great and flowing verse, an ample and sounding strophe, vast periods of fourteen and four-and-twenty lines. . . . His genius multiplies grand landscapes and colossal apparitions.”—*Taine*.

“ Its sign [that of Milton’s genius] is strength, but strength seraphic ; . . . a power of sustained flight, of far-reach-



ing vision, of lofty eloquence, such as belongs to the seraphim alone."—*Henry Van Dyke*.

"He raises his images of terror to a gigantic elevation that makes 'Ossa like a wart.'"—*William Hazlitt*.

"No style, when one has lived in it, is so spacious and so majestic a place to walk in."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"His poetry reminds us of the ocean."—*W. E. Channing*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,  
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides  
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,  
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge  
As . . .  
That sea-beast  
Leviathan, which God of all his works  
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream:  
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,  
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff  
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,  
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind  
Moors by his side under the lee, while night  
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays:  
So stretched out huge in length the arch fiend lay."

—*Paradise Lost*.

"He scarce had ceased, when the superior fiend  
Was moving toward the shore: his ponderous shield,  
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,  
Behind him cast; the broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulder like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening from the top of Fesole;  
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine,  
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast  
Of some great Admiral, were but the wand."

—*Paradise Lost*.

"Thence, full of anguish driven,  
 The space of seven continued nights he rode  
 With darkness ; thrice the equinoctial line  
 He circled ; four times crossed the car of night  
 From pole to pole, traversing each colure ;  
 On the eighth returned, and on the coast averse,  
 From entrance on cherubic watch, by stealth  
 Found unsuspected way."—*Paradise Lost*.

**5. Egoism—Conscious Inspiration.**—Milton himself spoke of his great epic as "a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapors of wine: like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases."

"There is an intolerant egotism which identifies itself with omnipotence, and whose sublimity is its apology ; there is an intolerable egotism which subordinates the sun to the watch in its own fob. Milton was of the former kind. . . . I have no manner of doubt, that he, like Dante, believed himself divinely inspired with what he had to utter. . . . From the first he looked upon himself as a man dedicated and set apart. . . . Plainly enough, here was a man who had received something more than episcopal ordination. . . . Milton's respect for himself and his own mind and its movements rises well-nigh to veneration."—*Lowell*.

"Connected with this austerity of character, discernible in Milton even in his youth, may be noted, also, . . . a haughty yet modest self-esteem and consciousness of his own powers. Throughout all of Milton's works there may be discerned a vein of this noble egotism, this unbashful self-assertion. Frequently, in arguing with an opponent or in

setting forth his own views on any subject of discussion, he passes, by a very slight topical connection, into an account of himself, his education, his designs, and his relations to the matter in question; in his later years Milton evidently believed himself to be, if not the greatest man in England, at least the greatest writer."—*David Masson*.

"Milton loves to present to his own imagination the glory of his strength and the greatness of his past achievements and his present afflicted state. . . . He looked upon his strength as something intrusted to him."—*Edward Dowden*.

"He had a lofty and steady confidence in himself."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"A sense of divine benediction runs through his epic poem from beginning to end."—*Mrs. Browning*.

"His poetry is full of personal memories, and his polemical works become at times memories of his life, passionate and naïf memories, where the writer reveals himself without any disguise."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"'Comus' is marked by more self-conscious art than any poem of its character which England has yet known. . . . His later poems reveal his sustained purpose to write a heroic poem. . . . It [his style] reveals the man more than the thought."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Every thing about him became as it were pontifical, almost sacramental."—*Augustine Birrell*.

"What other poet has shown so sincere a sense of the grandeur of his vocation and a moral effort so sublime and constant to make and keep himself worthy of it?"—*Matthew Arnold*.

"He had girded himself up and, as it were, sanctified himself for this service from his youth."—*William Haslitt*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Or, if Sion’s hill  
 Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook that flowed  
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
 Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,  
 That with no middle flight intends to soar  
 Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues  
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
 And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
 Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
 Instruct me, for Thou knowest ; Thou from the first  
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread  
 Dove-like satst brooding on the vast abyss,  
 And made it pregnant ; what in me is dark  
 Illumine ; what is low raise and support ;  
 That to the height of this great argument  
 I may assert eternal Providence,  
 And justify the ways of God to man.”—*Paradise Lost*.

“ So much the rather thou, celestial light,  
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
 Irradiate ; there plant eyes ; all mist from thence  
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.”—*Paradise Lost*.

“ If answerable style I can obtain  
 Of my celestial patroness, who deigns  
 Her nightly visitation unimplored,  
 And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires  
 Easy my unpremeditated verse ;  
 Since first this subject for heroic song  
 Pleased me long choosing and beginning late.”  
 —*Paradise Lost*.

**6. Moral Elevation—Purity.**—Carlyle has called Milton “ the moral king of English literature.” In his second “ Defence of the People of England ” Milton declares, concerning his experience on the Continent : “ I again take God

to witness that in all these places, where so many things are considered lawful, I lived sound and untouched from all profligacy and vice, having this thought perpetually before me, that though I might escape the eyes of men, I certainly could not the eyes of God." And later he writes: "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem." Milton was sensual, as he declared all poetry should be, but he was never sensual. His conception of the moral possibilities of poetry is best expressed in his own words: "These [poetic] abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness and what he works and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing the victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ."

"Milton consecrated his thoughts as well as his words. . . . He praised everywhere chaste love, piety, generosity, heroic force. . . . They [the Masques] were amusements for the castle; he made out of them lectures on magnanimity and constancy. . . . He was born with the instinct of noble things."—*Taine*.

"Look at the Lady in 'Comus'! she is the sweet embodiment of Milton's youthful ideal of virtue, clothed with the fairness of opening womanhood, armed with the sun-clad power of chastity. Darkness and danger cannot stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts! Evil things have no power upon her, but shrink abashed from her presence."—*Henry Van Dyke*.

"Thy soul was like a star ; and dwelt apart ;  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on itself did lay."—*Wordsworth*.

"His sympathy with festivities is modified by his native gravity and holiness to the quiet delight in those beautiful things which had in them purity and temperance. . . . The stately purity of thought and life is one of the foundations of his stately style."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"There are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved true, . . . and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the most High. Of these was Milton. Certain high moral dispositions Milton had from nature ; he sedulously trained and developed them until they became habits of great power. . . . Milton's power of style has for its great character elevation, which clearly comes in the main from a moral quality in him—his pureness. How high, clear, and splendid is his pureness ; and how intimately does its might enter into the voice of his poetry ! What gives Milton's professions such a stamp of their own is their accent of absolute sincerity. In this elevated strain of moral pureness his life was really pitched ; its strong immortal beauty passed into the diction and rhythm of his poetry."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"Milton's every line breathes sanctity of thought and pureness of manners, except when the train of narration requires the introduction of the rebellious spirits, and even then they are compelled to acknowledge the subjugation to God in such a manner as excites reverence and confirms piety."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"Milton stands erect, commanding, still visible as a man among men, and reads the laws of the moral sentiment to the new-born race. He is identified in the mind with all select

and holy images, with the supreme interests of the human race. . . . It is the ardent aspiration after pure and noble life, the aspiration which stamps every line he wrote, verse or prose, with a dignity as of an heroic age. This gives consistency to all his utterances."—*Mark Pattison*.

"In his long commerce with ancient and modern writers, he was able to preserve the native purity of his soul, to form a sublime ideal bent of purity, poetry, and fame."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"He revered moral purity and elevation, . . . as the inspirer of the intellect and especially of the higher efforts of poetry. His moral character was as strongly marked as his intellectual, and it may be expressed in one word, magnanimity."—*W. E. Channing*.

"He had a gravity in his temper, not melancholy; not till the later part of his life sour, morbid, or ill-tempered; but a certain serenity of mind—a mind not condescending to little things."—*Walter Bagehot*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity  
That when a soul is found sincerely so,  
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,  
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;  
And in clear dream and solemn vision,  
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;  
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants  
Begins to cast a beam on th' outward shape,  
The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
And turn it by degrees to the soul's essence,  
Till all be made immortal."—*Comus*.

"Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth  
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,  
And with those few art eminently seen,  
That labour up the hill of heavenly truth.

The better part, with Mary and with Ruth,  
Chosen thou hast ; and they that overween,  
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,  
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.

Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends  
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,  
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure  
Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends  
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,  
Hast gained thy entrance, virgin wise and pure."

—*To a Virtuous Young Lady.*

"Servant of God, well done ! Well hast thou fought  
The better fight, who single hast maintained  
Against revolted multitudes the cause  
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,  
And for the testimony of truth hast borne  
Universal reproach far worse to bear  
Than violence ; for this was all thy care—  
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds  
Judged thee perverse."—*Paradise Lost.*

**7. Fondness for the Indefinite.**—"He was fonder of the vague, perhaps I should better say the indefinite, where more is meant than meets the ear, than any other of our poets. . . . He produces his effects by dilating our imaginations with an impalpable hint rather than by concentrating them upon too precise particulars. . . . He generalizes always instead of specifying. . . . He is too wise to hamper himself with any statement for which he can be brought to book, but wraps himself in a mist of looming indefiniteness." —*Lowell.*

"His characters rise before our eyes like superhuman statues ; and, their far removal rendering vain our curious hands, preserves our admiration and their majesty. We rise further and higher to the origin of things, among eternal beings, to the commencement of thought and life, to the battle of God in this unknown world, where sentiments and existences, raised



above the ken of man, elude his judgment and criticism to command his veneration and awe."—*Taine*.

"The English poet [Milton] has never thought of taking the measure of Satan. He gives us merely a vague idea of vast bulk. In one passage the fiend lies stretched out huge in length and floating many a rood, equal in size to the earth-born enemies of Jove or to the sea-monster which the mariner mistakes for an island. . . . Milton avoids the loathsome details [of Dante] and takes refuge in indistinct but solemn and tremendous imagery."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"There is no subject so vast or so terrible as to repel or intimidate him. . . . The overpowering grandeur of a theme kindles and attracts him. . . . An indefiniteness in the description of Satan's person excites without shocking the imagination."—*W. E. Channing*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A dungeon horrible on all sides round  
As one great furnace flamed, yet from these flames  
No light but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades."—*Paradise Lost*.

"Beyond this flood a frozen continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land  
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems  
Of ancient pile."—*Paradise Lost*.

"Before their eyes in sudden view appear  
The secrets of the hoary deep—a dark  
Illimitable ocean, without bound,  
Without dimension ; where length, breadth, and height  
And time and place are lost ; where eldest Night  
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold  
Eternal anarchy amidst the noise  
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand."—*Paradise Lost*.

**8. Profound Learning—Intellectuality.**—This endowment appears continually both in Milton's prose and in his poetry. In his early manhood Milton writes to a friend as follows: "I who certainly have not merely wetted the tip of my lips in the stream of these [the classical] languages, but in proportion to my years have swallowed the most copious draughts, can yet sometimes retire with avidity and delight to feast on Dante, Petrarch, and many others."

"His literature was unquestionably great. He read all the languages which are considered either learned or polite; Hebrew with its two dialects, Latin, Greek, Italian, French, and Spanish. In Latin his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and critics; he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. . . . When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility. . . . He was master of his language in its full extent."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"The author unfolds the treasures of his learning, heaping up the testimony of Scripture, passages from the fathers, and quotations from the poets, laying sacred and profane antiquity alike under contribution, and subtly discussing the sense of this and that Greek or Hebrew term."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"Milton's learning attends him at every step; he never utters himself except through learned lips, in well-considered phrase. . . . He is the poet of the scholars."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"Milton seems ambitious of letting us know, by his excursions on free will and predestination and his many glances upon history, astronomy, geography, and the like, as well as by terms and phrases he sometimes makes use of, that he is acquainted with the whole circle of arts and sciences."—*Addison*.

"He was a profound scholar, a man of vast compass of thought, imbued thoroughly with all ancient and modern learning, to master, to mould, to impregnate with his intel-

lectual power, his great and various acquisitions. . . . The very splendor of his poetic fame has tended to obscure or conceal the extent of his mind. . . . Milton has that universality which marks the highest order of intellect." —*W. E. Channing*.

"The power of his mind is stamped on every line. . . . We feel ourselves under the influence of a mighty intellect, which, the nearer it approaches to others, becomes more distinct from them." —*William Hazlitt*.

"Vast knowledge, close logic, grand passion; these were his marks. . . . He was eminently learned, elegant, travelled, philosophic, and of high worldly culture for the times. . . . The phrases in Milton are immense; page-long periods are necessary to enclose the train of so many linked arguments and so many accumulated metaphors around the governing thought. . . . In the limits of a single work are found the events and the feelings of several centuries and of a whole nation." —*Taine*.

"Milton is not a man of the fields but of books. His life is his study, and when he steps abroad into the air he carries his study thoughts with him." —*Mark Pattison*.

"Milton and Tennyson are the most learned, the most classical of all English poets." —*Edward Dowden*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned  
Or of reviv'd Adonis, or renowned  
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son;  
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king  
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.

. . . . .

—pleasing was his shape,  
And lovely; never since of serpent kind  
Lovelier; not those that in Illyria chang'd  
Hermione and Cadmus, or the god

In Epidaurus ; nor to which transformed  
 Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen ;  
 He with Olympias ; this with her who bore  
 Scipio the height of Rome."—*Paradise Lost*.

" Black, but such as in esteem  
 Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,  
 Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove  
 To set her beauty's praise above  
 The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended :  
 Yet thou art higher far descended ;  
 Thee, bright-haired Vesta long of yore  
 To solitary Saturn bore ;  
 His daughter she (in Saturn's reign,  
 Such mixture was not held a stain)  
 Oft in glimmering bowers and glades  
 He met her, and in secret shades  
 Of woody Ida's inmost grove,  
 While yet there was no fear of Jove."—*Il Penseroso*.

" Nathless he so endured, till on the beach  
 Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and call'd  
 His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced  
 Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks  
 In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades  
 High over-arched imbower ; or scattered sedge  
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed  
 Had vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew  
 Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,  
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued  
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld  
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses."

—*Paradise Lost*.

**9. Adaptation of Sound to Sense.**—" I imagine that there are more perfect examples in Milton of musical expression, or of an adaptation of the sound and movement of the verse to the meaning of the passage, than in all our other writers, whether of rhyme or of blank verse, put together (with the exception of Shakespeare). . . . Read any other

blank verse except Milton's—Thompson's, Young's, Cowper's, Wordsworth's—and it will be found, from the want of this same insight 'into the hidden soul of harmony,' to be mere lumbering prose."—*William Hazlitt*.

"We may be certain that when so great an artist in verse as Milton was writing, lines which seem to us unmusical were made so with a purpose. He insists upon accent which seems to us strangely put, in order that he may make some particular thought or some particular thing in his description emphatic."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"He was master of his language in its full extent; and has selected the melodious words with such diligence that from his books alone the art of English poetry might be learned."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"Rarely or never was sense better linked to sound than in some of the lines of '*L' Allegro*' and '*Il Penseroso*.'"—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"His words are the words of one who made a study of the language, as a poet studies language, searching its capacities for the expression of surging emotion. Milton is the first English writer who, possessing in the ancient models a standard of the effect which could be produced by the choice of words, set himself to the conscious study of our native tongue, with a firm faith in its as yet undeveloped powers as an instrument of thought."—*David Masson*.

"His rhythm is as admirable when it is unusual as when it is simplest."—*Matthew Arnold*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"But chief the spacious hall  
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,  
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees  
In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,  
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive."

—*Paradise Lost*.

"Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee  
 Jest and youthful Jollity,  
 Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,  
 Nods and Becks and wreathèd Smiles,  
 Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
 And love to live in dimple sleek;  
 Sport that wrinkled Care derides  
 And Laughter, holding both his sides;  
 Come and trip it, as you go,  
 On the light fantastic toe."—*L'Allegro*.

"The oracles are dumb;  
 No voice or hideous hum  
 Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving;  
 Apollo from his shrine  
 Can no more divine,  
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving."  
 —*Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

"Meanwhile welcome joy and feast,  
 Midnight shout and revelry,  
 Tipsy dance and jollity.  
 Braid your locks with rosy twine,  
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.  
 Rigour now is gone to bed,  
 And advice with scrupulous head.  
 Strict age and sour severity,  
 With their grave saws in slumber lie.  
 We, that are of purer fire,  
 Imitate the starry quire;  
 Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,  
 Lead in swift rounds the months and years."  
 —*Comus*.

**10. Equanimity—Serene Dignity.**—While Milton's prose is frequently disfigured with ill-natured expressions, his verse generally flows on undisturbed, like a deep stream.

"The strength of his mind overcame every calamity  
 Neither blindness nor gout nor age nor penury nor domestic

afflictions nor political disappointments nor abuse nor proscription nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience."—*Macaulay*.

"He did not face objects on a level, as a mortal, but from on high, like those archangels of Goethe, who embrace at a glance the whole ocean lashing its coasts and the earth rolling on, wrapt in the harmony of the fraternal stars."—*Taine*.

"Himself a poem. Grave, serene, wholly given up to the contemplation of heavenly things, slowly maturing the work of his life, isolated in his generation by the very force of his genius. His soul, as Wordsworth has said, was 'like a star and dwelt apart.' He has an indefinable serenity and victoriousness, a sustained equality, an indomitable power; one might almost say that he wraps us in the skirt of his robe and wafts us with him to the eternal regions where he himself dwells."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"As a man moving among other men, he possessed, in that moral seriousness and stoic scorn of temptation which characterized him, a spring of ever present pride, dignifying his whole bearing among his fellows, and at times arousing him to a kingly intolerance. He was one of those servants to whom God had entrusted the stewardship of the ten talents."—*David Masson*.

"The strength of his mind overcame every calamity. There is no such unfailing dignity as his."—*Lowell*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide;  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker and present  
My true account, lest He, returning, chide;  
'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'  
I fondly ask: but Patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, <sup>1/</sup>“God doth not need  
 Either man’s work or his own gifts ; who best  
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
 Is kingly ; thousands at his bidding speed,  
 And post o’er land and ocean without rest ;  
 They also serve who only stand and wait.”

—*Sonnet on His Blindness.*

“Cyriack, this three years’ day these eyes, though clear,  
 To outward view, of blemish or of spot,  
 Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,  
 Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear  
 Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,  
 Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not  
 Against Heaven’s hand or will, nor bate a jot  
 Of heart or hope ; but still bear up and steer  
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask ?  
 The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied  
 In liberty’s defence, my noble task,  
 Of which all Europe rings from side to side.  
 This thought might lead me through the world’s vain mask  
 Content, though blind, had I no better guide.”

—*To Cyriack Skinner.*

“But not to me returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
 Or sight of vernal bloom or summer rose,  
 Or flocks or herds or human face divine ;  
 But cloud instead, and ever during dark.  
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
 Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair  
 Presented with a universal blank  
 Of nature’s works to me expunged and raised,  
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
 So much the rather then, Celestial Light,  
 Shine inward, and the mind thro’ all her powers  
 Irradiate ; there plant eyes ; all mist from them  
 Purge and disperse that I may see and tell  
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.”—*Paradise Lost.*



## II. Incongruity—Contradiction—Unnaturalness.

—A certain class of critics, notably among the French, is fond of making merry over Milton's incongruity. While the consensus of critical opinion seems not to uphold Scherer's dictum that "Paradise Lost" is "a poem which is at once the most extraordinary and at the same time the most intolerable in existence," we cannot fairly ignore the force of these adverse criticisms.

"The confusion of spirit and matter which pervades the whole narration of the war of Heaven fills it with incongruity ; and the book in which it is related is, I believe, the favorite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increased. . . . In 'Lycidas,' the shepherd is likewise now a feeder of sheep and afterwards an ecclesiastical preacher, a superintendent of a Christian flock."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"Milton is a clumsy imitator of the Greeks, who caricatures creation and who, while Moses represents the Eternal Being as creating the world by his word, makes the Messiah take a big compass out of a cupboard in heaven to trace out the work. . . . His marriage of Sin and Death, and the snakes of which Sin is delivered, make any man of tolerably delicate taste sick, and his long description of a hospital is only good for a grave-digger. . . . The archangel Michael leads Adam to a hill and delivers a complete course of lectures to him on sacred history. . . . 'Paradise Lost' is not only a theological poem—two words which cry out at finding themselves united—but it is at the same time a commentary on texts of Scripture. . . . In fixing on such a subject, Milton was obliged to treat the whole story as a literal and authentic history ; and, worse still, to take a side on the questions which it starts. Now these questions are the very thorniest in theology : and so it comes about that Milton, who intended to instruct us, merely launches us on a sea of difficulties. . . . The long discourses with which he fills the gaps between the action are only sermons, and do but make

evident the absence of dramatic matter. . . . We see a battle, but we cannot take either the fight or the fighters seriously. A God who can be resisted is not a God. . . . The poem only became possible at the cost of this impossibility. . . . He makes Lucifer masquerade, now as a toad, now as a pigmy; he makes the devil fire cannon in heaven. When the day comes for him to be able at last to realize the dreams of his youth and endow his country with an epic, he will construct it of two matters, of gold and of clay, of sublimity and of scholasticism, and will leave us a poem which is at once the most extraordinary and at the same time the most intolerable. 'Paradise Lost' has shared the same fate of its hero, that is to say, of the devil. The idea of Satan is a contradictory idea; for it is contradictory to know God and yet attempt rivalry with Him."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"Ecstasy alone renders visible and credible the objects of ecstasy. If you tell us of the exploits of the Deity as you tell us of Cromwell's, in a grave and lofty tone, we do not see God; and, as He constitutes the whole of your poem, we do not see anything. . . . Milton's poem, while it suppresses lyrical illusion, admits critical inquiry. . . . No longer hearing odes, we would see objects and souls: we ask that Adam and Eve should act in conformity with their primitive nature; that God, Satan, and Messiah should act and feel in conformity with their superhuman nature; Shakespeare would hardly have been equal to the task; Milton, the logician and reasoner, failed in it. He gives us correct solemn discourse and gives us nothing more; his characters are speeches, and in their sentiments we find only heaps of puerilities and contradictions. . . . I listen [to Adam and Eve] and I hear an English household, two readers of the period—Colonel Hutchinson and his wife. Good Heavens! dress them at once. People with so much culture should have invented before all a pair of trousers and modesty.

. . . This Adam entered Paradise *via* England. . . .  
 She [Eve], like a good housewife, talks about the *menu*.  
 . . . She makes sweet wine, perry, creams ; scatters flowers  
 and leaves under the table. What an excellent housewife !  
 What a great many votes she will gain among the country  
 squires, when Adam stands for Parliament ! Adam belongs  
 to the Opposition, is a Whig, a Puritan. . . . The an-  
 gel, though ethereal, eats like a Lincolnshire farmer. . . .  
 At table Eve listens to the angel's stories, then discreetly rises  
 at dessert, when they are getting into politics. . . . She  
 rebels with a little prick of proud vanity, like a young lady  
 who mayn't go out by herself. She has her way, goes alone,  
 and eats the apple. Here interminable speeches come down  
 on the reader, as numerous and cold as winter showers. . . .  
 The serpent seduces Eve by a collection of arguments wor-  
 thy of the punctilious Chillingworth. . . . What is  
 smaller than a god sunk to the level of a king and a man !  
 . . . Milton's Jehovah is a grave king, who maintains a  
 suitable state, something like Charles I. . . . We per-  
 ceive that Milton's Jehovah is connected with the theologian  
 James I., versed in the arguments of Arminians and Gomarists,  
 very clever at the *distinguo*, and before all incomparably te-  
 dious. . . . Goethe's God, half abstraction, half legend,  
 source of calm oracles, a vision just beheld after a pyramid of  
 ecstatic strophes, greatly excels this Miltonic God, a business  
 man, a schoolmaster, an ostentatious man. . . . Milton's  
 heaven is a Whitehall filled with bedizened footmen. The an-  
 gels are the choristers, whose business is to sing cantatas about  
 the king. . . . Milton describes the tables, the dishes,  
 the wine, the vessels. It is a popular festival ; I miss the fire-  
 works, the bell-ringing, as in London. . . . Heaven is  
 partitioned off like a good map. . . . These sorry angels  
 have their minds as well disciplined as their limbs ; they have  
 passed their youth in a class in logic and in a drill school.  
 . . . What a heaven ! It is enough to disgust a man with

Paradise ; anyone would rather enter Charles I.'s troop of lackeys or Cromwell's Ironsides. We have orders of the day, a hierarchy, exact submission, extra-duties, disputes, regulated ceremonials, prostration, etiquette, furbished arms, arsenals, depots of chariots and ammunition. Was it worth while leaving earth to find in heaven carriage-works, buildings, artillery, a manual of tactics, the art of salutation, and the Almanac de Gotha ?"—*Taine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" So down they sat,  
And to their viands fell ; nor seemingly  
The angel, nor in mist, the common gloss  
Of theologians ; but with keen dispatch  
Of real hunger and concoctive heat  
To transubstantiate ; what redounds, transpires  
Through spirits with ease ; nor wonder, if by fire  
Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist  
Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,  
Metals or drossiest ore to perfect gold,  
As from the mine. Meanwhile at table, Eve  
Ministered naked, and their flowing cups  
With pleasant liquors drowned."

—*Paradise Lost*.

" If this be our condition, thus to dwell  
In narrow circuit straitened by a foe,  
Subtle or violent, we not endued  
Single with like defence, wherever met,  
How are we happy, still in fear of harm ?  
But harm precedes not sin : only our foe,  
Tempting, affronts us with his foul esteem  
Of our integrity : his foul esteem  
Sticks no dishonour on our front, but turns  
Foul on himself ; then wherefore shunned or feared  
By us ? who rather double honour, gain

From his surmise proved false, find peace within,  
Favor from Heaven, our witness from the event.  
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed  
Alone, without exterior help sustained ?”

—*Paradise Lost.*

“ Immediate in a flame,  
From those deep-throated engines belched,  
                    . . . . Chained thunderbolts and hail  
Of iron globes ; which on the victor host  
Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote,  
That whom they hit none on their feet might stand,  
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell  
By thousands, angel on archangel rolled.”

—*Paradise Lost.*

## DRYDEN, 1631-1700

**Biographical Outline.**—John Dryden, born August 9, 1631, at Aldwinckle Allsaints, Northamptonshire; his father was a justice of the peace, the third son of a baronet, and his mother the daughter of a clergyman; Dryden gets "his first learning" at Tichmarsh, where a monument was afterward erected to him and to his parents, who were buried there; later he obtains a scholarship at Westminster School, where Busby is his head-master and Locke and South are his school-mates; he enters Trinity College, Cambridge, on a scholarship in July, 1650; he writes a few elegies and commendatory poems before entering Cambridge; in July, 1652, he is "discom-muned," and is compelled to apologize to the vice-master for contumacy, but is graduated B.A. in January, 1654; his father dies in June, 1654, leaving to Dryden an estate worth £40 a year, after deducting his mother's life-interest; he does not try for an advanced university degree, probably because of a lack of means; his kinsmen sided with the people against Charles I., and his cousin became chamberlain to Cromwell and was one of Charles's judges; Dryden is said to have begun life as a clerk to this cousin; upon Cromwell's death, in September, 1658, Dryden writes his "Heroic Stanzas," which are published in a volume with poems by Waller and Sprat.

After the Restoration, Dryden takes lodgings with one Herringman, a bookseller of the New Exchange, London, for whom he is reported (doubtless incorrectly) to have been hack-writer; Herringman publishes Dryden's books till 1679, when the poet meets Sir Robert Howard, who seems to have aided him; on December 1, 1663, Dryden is married to

Lady Elizabeth Howard, sister of his friend ; the lady had been the subject of some scandals, and Dryden is said to have been bullied into the marriage by her brothers ; her father settles upon them a small estate in Wiltshire, but a difference of prior social standing and apparent mutual infidelity make the marriage an unhappy one, although both Dryden and his wife were warmly attached to their children ; in November, 1662, Dryden is elected a member of the Royal Society, where he associates with Bacon, Gilbert, Boyle, and Harvey ; about this time the opening of the King's Theatre and the Duke's Theatre in London causes Dryden to begin play-writing ; his first acted play, "The Wild Gallant," was performed in February, 1663, and failed ; during the same year his second play, "The Wild Ladies," succeeded fairly, at the same theatre ; Pepys records seeing Dryden in February, 1664, at Covent Garden coffee-house, "with all the wits of the town ;" early in 1665 a third play, "The Indian Emperor," is brought out with marked success.

While the theatres are closed, from May, 1665, to December, 1666, because of the Plague and the great London fire, Dryden retires to a seat of his father-in-law at Charlton in Wiltshire, where his son is born ; during this retreat he composes his "*Annus Mirabilis*" and his "Essay on Dramatic Poesy," defending the use of rhyme in the drama ; the "Essay" is published in March, 1667 ; Dryden's fourth drama, "Secret Love," is produced at the King's Theatre, and Nell Gwyn is one of the *personæ* ; during 1667 he also produces "Sir Martin Mar-all," one of his most successful plays ; about this time he makes a contract with the King's Theatre company to provide them with three plays a year, in consideration of receiving one-tenth of the profits of the theatre ; he did not provide all the plays stipulated, but received as high as £400 a year, as his share of the profits, until the burning of the theatre in 1672 ; in 1669 he published an opera called "The State of Innocence," founded, with Milton's

permission, on "Paradise Lost"; of his heroic tragedies, "Tyrannic Love" appeared in 1669 and "Almanzar" and "Almahide" in 1670; his "All for Love" is produced in 1672; in 1668 (at the King's request) the Archbishop of Canterbury confers upon Dryden the degree of M.A., and in 1670 he is made poet-laureate and historiographer, offices which, combined, gave him a salary of £200 a year, with a butt of Canary wine; his total annual income between 1670 and 1681, from all sources, averaged from £420 to £577.

Between 1668 and 1681 he produced about fourteen plays; the comedies were most licentious, gave offence even then, and have been deservedly lost; in 1673 he produces "Amboyna," a tragedy founded on the existing relation of the English with the Dutch, and in 1681 another called "The Spanish Friar," founded on the Popish plot; his last and finest rhymed tragedy, "Aurengzebe," was produced in 1675, and is said to have been read in manuscript and revised by Charles II.; about this time Dryden proposes to write an epic poem, and asks for a pension on that ground, admitting that he "never felt himself very fit for tragedy;" he receives a pension of £100 a year, but writes, instead of an epic, his finest play, "All for Love;" in 1679 he brings out an alteration of "Troilus and Cressida," in which he pays further homage to Shakespeare.

In 1671 his "heroic tragedies" are ridiculed in the famous "Rehearsal," written by the Duke of Buckingham, Butler, Sprat, and others; he has various literary controversies, and is beaten by ruffians, hired by his enemies, in December, 1679; the main cause was the attribution to Dryden of Mulgrave's "Essay on Satire," written in 1675 and reflecting severely upon the private life of prominent personages; Dryden was charged by various libellers with sympathy with Shaftesbury in his opposition to the Court, and so, in November, 1681, he demonstrated his loyalty to Charles II. by publishing the first of his great satires, "Absalom and Achitophel;" Tate de-



clares that the theme of the satire was suggested to Dryden by Charles ; it obtained at once an enormous sale, and is still regarded as " the finest satire in our language for masculine insight and for vigor of expression ; " his second great satire, " The Medal," appears in March, 1682 ; partisans of Shaftesbury reply in half a dozen satires upon Dryden, and he rejoins with " Mac Flecknoe," published October 4, 1682, especially directed against Shadwell, who had repudiated his former friendship for Dryden, and had published " The Medal of John Boyes [Dryden] ; " in November, 1682, appeared a second part of " Absalom and Achitophel," in which two hundred lines were written by Dryden and the rest by Nahum Tate ; during the same month Dryden publishes his " *Religio Laici* " (a defence of the Anglican position) and " The Duke of Guise," a satire, of which the greater part was written by Nathaniel Lee ; during 1682-84 he writes many prologues, epilogues, and prefaces, and secures as much as three guineas for each.

In 1684 he translates Maimbourg's " History of the League," and in that and the following year publishes two volumes of " Miscellaneous Poems," including contributions from other writers ; evidence taken from his private letters at this time shows that he was in financial straits, and was writing under the spur of poverty ; in December, 1683, after an appeal for aid to the Earl of Rochester, he is appointed collector of customs in the port of London, an office which, through its fees, somewhat relieved him financially ; near the close of Charles's life Dryden writes two operas, " Albion and Albanus " and " King Arthur," in honor of the King's political successes ; the latter opera was produced in June, 1685, after the accession of James ; Dryden's offices and his pension of £100 are continued under James II. ; in January, 1686, he is reported to have been seen, with his two sons and Mrs. Nelly (mistress to the late King), " going to Mass ; " his conversion to Romanism at this time seems to have been

mainly from venal motives ; he seems, however, gradually to have become a sincere adherent of the Catholic Church, and soon begins to write in her favor ; he translates but does not publish Vorillar's " History of Religious Revolutions," and is employed by James to answer Stillingfleet, who had assailed papers upon Catholicism written by James himself ; in April, 1687, Dryden publishes " The Hind and the Panther," his most famous work ; this poem was parodied by Prior and others ; Dryden also translates a life of St. Francis Xavier and writes "*Britannia Rediviva*," a congratulatory poem on the birth of James's son, in June, 1688.

By the Revolution of 1688 Dryden loses all his offices, and is succeeded as laureate by Shadwell ; he receives financial aid from the Earl of Dorset, and returns to his former occupation of play-writing ; " Don Sebastian," one of his best tragedies, and his comedy " Amphytrion " are performed in 1690 ; in 1691 he brings out his opera " King Arthur," altered in its politics to fit the times ; in 1692 he produces " Cleomenes," which was finished by Southerne, because of Dryden's illness ; his last drama, " Love Triumphant," was produced in 1694, but failed ; in 1698 Dryden is attacked, with other contemporaries, in the famous work of Jeremy Collier against the theatre, and he acknowledges that Collier's strictures are in part just ; meantime he had written, in honor of the Countess of Abingdon, a stranger to Dryden, his elegiac poem " Eleonora," probably from purely pecuniary motives ; in 1693 he publishes a translation of Juvenal and Persius and a new volume of " Miscellanies ; " about 1693 he begins his translation of Virgil, which is published by subscription in July, 1697 ; Pope declares that Dryden received £1,200 for the " Virgil ; " he also received presents from various noble patrons, and offended his publisher, Tonson, by steadfastly refusing to dedicate the " Virgil " to William III. ; in 1697 he begins his " Fables," consisting of translations from Homer's " Iliad," Ovid's " Metamorphoses," Chaucer, and Boccaccio,

amounting to 12,000 verses when published in 1700; about 1697 he again appeals to the Government for aid, but says that he "cannot buy favor by forsaking his religion;" in 1697 he also writes for a London musical society his famous ode, "Alexander's Feast;" during his later years he spends most of his time at Will's Coffee-house, surrounded by young wits and worshipped as literary dictator; early in 1700 he writes an additional scene for Fletcher's "Pilgrim," in preparation for its performance as a benefit for Fletcher's son; Dryden also carries on a correspondence with "enthusiastic ladies," and is courted by Congreve, Addison, and other prominent writers; he dies in his house in Gerrard Street, London, May 1, 1700.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

### ✓ I. Cold Intellectuality — Lack of Emotion.—

"These manners of Dryden show that literature had become a matter of study rather than inspiration, an employment for the taste rather than for the enthusiasm, a source of distraction rather than of emotion. His was a singularly solid and judicious mind; an excellent reasoner, accustomed to discriminate his ideas, armed with good, long-meditated proofs, strong in discussion, asserting principles, establishing his sub-divisions, citing authorities, drawing inferences. His style is well moulded, exact, and simple, free from the affectations and ornaments with which Pope afterwards burdened his own. He shows a mind constantly upright, bending rather from conventionality than from nature, with dash and afflatus, occupied with grave thoughts, and subjecting his conduct to his convictions. Pamphlets and dissertations in verse, satires, letters, translations and imitations, this is the field on which logical faculties and the art of writing find their best occupa-

tion. This is the true domain of Dryden and of classical reason. He develops, defines, concludes ; he declares his thought, then takes it up again, that his reader may receive it prepared, and, having received it, may retain it. Dryden is the most classical of all the English poets. The poetic genius of this man was preëminently robust and unromantic.”—

*Taine.*

“He is best upon a level table-land ; it is true, a very high level, but still somewhere between the loftier peaks of inspiration and the plain of every-day life. . . . He was a strong thinker, who sometimes carried common-sense to a height where it catches the light of a diviner air, and warmed reason till it had well-nigh the illuminating property of intuition. He blows the mind clear. In ripeness of mind and bluff heartiness of expression he takes rank with the best.”—

*Lowell.*

“There is no fine power of dramatic story, no exquisite invention of character or circumstance, no truth to nature in ideal landscape : at the utmost, there is conventional dramatic situation, with an occasional flash of splendid imagery such as may be struck out in the heat of heroic declamation.”

—*David Masson.*

“Nay, but he was a poet, an excellent poet—in marble ; and Phidias, with the sculpturesque ideal separated from his working tool, might have carved him. He was a poet without passion. . . . He thrust out nature with a fork.

. . . To be sure it was not necessary that John Dryden should keep a Bolingbroke to think for him : but to be sure again, it is something to be born with a heart, particularly for a poet.”—*Mrs. Browning.*

“He is, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic ; and had so little sensibility of effusions purely natural that he did not esteem them in others ; simplicity gave him no pleasure.”—*Samuel Johnson.*

“Almost the only feature of the future Dryden which this

production [‘Lines on the Death of Lord Hastings’] discloses is his deficiency in sensibility or heart; exciting as the occasion was, it does not contain an affecting line. . . . Without either creative imagination or any power of pathos, he is in argument, in satire, and in declamatory magnificence, the greatest of our poets.”—*G. L. Craik*.

“He was a more vigorous thinker, a more correct and logical declaimer, and had more of what may be called strength of mind than Pope.”—*William Haslitt*.

“His imagination was torpid until it was awakened by his judgment. . . . He sat down to work himself, by reflection and argument, into a deliberate wildness, a rational frenzy. No man exercised so much influence on the age. He was perhaps the greatest of those whom we have designated as the critical poets; and his literary career exhibited, on a reduced scale, the whole history of the school to which he belonged. . . . His command of language was immense. With him died the secret of the old poetical diction of England, the art of producing rich effects by familiar words. . . . His critical works are, beyond all comparison, superior to any which had, till then, appeared in England. . . . He began with quaint parallels and empty mouthing. He gradually acquired the energy of the satirist, the gravity of the moralist, the rapture of the lyric poet. He was utterly destitute of the power of exhibiting real human beings.”—*Macaulay*.

“In literary criticism Dryden was himself the greatest authority of the period, and for many years it was in this form that he at once exercised himself and educated his age in the matter of prose writing.”—*George Saintsbury*.

“His excellencies were those of the intellect and not of the spirit. Dryden’s poetry . . . is of the very highest kind in its class. Wherever the pure intellect comes into play, there he is invariably excellent.”—*T. R. Lounsbury*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground ;  
 Cries ‘ Eureka ’ the mighty secret’s found :  
 God is that spring of good, supreme and blest ;  
 We, made to serve, and in that service blest ;  
 If so, some rules of worship must be given,  
 Distributed to all alike by Heaven ;  
 Else God were partial and to some denied  
 The means His justice should for all provide.”  
*—Religio Laici.*

“ Yet ’tis our duty and our interest too,  
 Such monuments as we can build to raise ;  
 Lest all the world prevent what we should do,  
 And claim a title in him by their praise.  
  
 How shall I then begin or how conclude,  
 To draw a fame so truly circular ?  
 For in a round what order can be show’d,  
 Where all the parts so equal perfect are ? ”  
*—Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell.*

“ Farewell, too little and too lately known,  
 Whom I began to think and call my own :  
 For sure our souls were near allied, and thine  
 Cast in the same poetic mould with mine,  
 One common note on either lyre did strike  
 And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.”  
*—Lines to the Memory of His Friend, Mr. Oldham.*

✓ 2. **Cool, Biting Satire.**—“ The prodigality of irony, the sting in the tail of every couplet, the ingenuity with which the odious charges are made against the victim, and above all the polish of the language and the verse and the tone of half-condescending banter, were things of which that time had had no experience. . . . There had been a continuous tradition among satirists that they must affect immense moral indignation at the evils they attacked. . . .

Now this moral indignation, apt to become rather tiresome when the subject is purely ethical, becomes quite intolerable when the subject is political. It never does for the political satirist to lose his temper and to rave and rant and denounce with the air of an inspired prophet. Dryden, and perhaps Dryden alone, has observed this rule. . . . His manner toward this subject is that of a cool, but not ill-humored scorn. . . . His verse strides along with a careless Olympian motion, as if the writer were looking at his victims with a kind of good-humored scorn rather than with any elaborate triumph. . . . Not only is there nothing better than Dryden's satirical and didactic poems of their own kind in English, but it may almost be said that there is nothing better in any other literary language. . . . There never was, perhaps, a satirist who less abused his power, for personal ends. The satire was as bitter as Butler's, but less grotesque and less labored."—*George Saintsbury*.

"His greatest power . . . was in satire—satire into which he formed his whole temperament, even more than the brilliancy of his mind, and which represents chiefly vehement invective, as distinct from the sting and scintillation of the epigram and lampoon."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"That coolness of irony, that polished banter, which gave to Dryden his extraordinary influence as a satirist. It is as a satirist and pleader in verse that Dryden is best known, and as both he is in some respects unrivalled. His satire is not so sly as Chaucer's, but it is distinguished by the same good-nature. There is no malice in it."—*Lowell*.

"The lofty and impassioned satire of Dryden, uniting the vehemence of anger with the self-control of conscious determination, presents the finest example of that sort of voluntary emotion."—*Hartley Coleridge*.

"His vein of satire was keen, terse, and powerful beyond any that has since been displayed. . . . The satirical powers of Dryden were of the highest order. . . . The models of



satire afforded by Dryden, as they have never been equalled by any succeeding poet, were in a tone of excellence superior far to all that had preceded them. . . . He draws his arrow to the head and dismisses it straight upon the object of aim."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"As a satirist he has rivalled Juvenal. His 'Absalom and Achitophel' is the greatest satire of modern times. There is a magnanimity of abuse in some of these epithets [in 'Absalom and Achitophel'], a fearless choice of topics, of invective, which may be considered as the heroical in satire."—*William Hazlitt*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Let him be gallows-free by my consent,  
And nothing suffer, since he nothing meant;  
Hanging supposes human soul and reason;  
This animal's below committing treason.  
Shall he be hanged who never could rebel?  
That's a preferment to Achitophel.

. . . . .  
Railing in other men may be a crime,  
But ought to pass for mere instinct in him:  
Instinct he follows, and no further knows,  
For to write verse with him is to transpose."

—*Absalom and Achitophel*.

"All human things are subject to decay,  
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey,  
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young  
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long;  
In prose and verse, was own'd, without dispute,  
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute;  
Worn out with business, did at length debate  
To settle the succession of the state;  
And, pondering, which of all his sons was fit  
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,  
Cried, 'Tis resolved: for nature pleads that he  
Should only rule who most resembles me.

Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,  
 Mature in dulness from his early years :  
 Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he,  
 Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.  
 The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,  
 But Shadwell never deviates into sense.  
 Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,  
 Strike through, and make a lucid interval ;  
 But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray.' ”

—*Mac Flecknoe.*

“ Power was his aim ; but, thrown from that pretence,  
 The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence ;  
 And malice reconciled him to his prince.  
 Him in the anguish of his soul he served,  
 Rewarded faster still than he deserved.  
 Behold him now exalted into trust,  
 His counsel's oft convenient, seldom just :  
 Even in the most sincere advice he gave,  
 He had a grudging still to be a knave.  
 The frauds he learn'd in his fanatic years  
 Make him uneasy in his lawful gears :  
 At best as little honest as he could,  
 And, like white witches, mischievously good.”

—*The Medal.*

✓ **3. Metrical Skill.**—“ Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language. Of Dryden's poems it was said by Pope that he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply. Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such a variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre.” —*Samuel Johnson.*

“ His versification flowed so easily as to lessen the bad effects of rhyme in dialogue. . . . He had powers of versification superior to those possessed by any other English

author. . . . He first showed that the English language was capable of uniting smoothness and strength. He knew how to choose the flowing and sonorous words ; to vary the pauses and adjust the accents ; to diversify the cadence and yet preserve the smoothness of the metre. In lyrical poetry, Dryden must be allowed to have no equal. ' Alexander's Feast ' is sufficient to show his supremacy in that brilliant department."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

" What is of greatest importance to poetical students is to observe what progress Dryden made in the new prosody and how, by means of it, he drew out those qualities which had been too much neglected in the verse of the previous age—ease, intelligibility, and flexibility. . . . His fluency, his sustained power, the cogency and the lucidity of his logic, polished the surface of didactic and narrative poetry, which, until he came, had been rocky and irregular. Dryden's command over versification is shown in the prologues and epilogues which he produced not merely for his own plays but for those of others. . . . Dryden was greatly Pope's superior as a craftsman in verse. Pope excelled only in the couplet, whereas Dryden was master of blank-verse also and of a greater variety of lyrical measure than is generally supposed. He attained full mastery over the balance of the iambic verse, so that the poet could rule the line and not the line carry him whither it would. He purified the national style to a very marked extent, freed it of uncouth and superfluous ornament, and drew the parts of the language into harmonious relations with one another."—*Edmund Gosse*.

" It was in declamatory and didactic rhyme, with all that could consist with it, that Dryden excelled. It was in the metrical utterance of weighty sentences, in the metrical conduct of an argument, in vehement satirical invective, and in such passages of lyric passion as depend for their effect on rolling grandeur of sound, that he was prominently great."—*David Masson*.

"Though contracted by habits of classical argument, though stiffened by controversy and polemics, though unable to create souls or depict artless and delicate sentiments, he is a genuine poet. He lived among great men and courtiers, in a society of artificial manners and measured language, but under his regular versification the artist's soul is brought to light."—*Taine*.

"The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march and energy divine."—*Pope*.

"In Dryden, the rhyme waits upon the thought. He knew how to give new modulation, sweetness, and force to pentameter."—*Lowell*.

"In the management of the heroic couplet Dryden has never been equalled. His versification sinks and swells in happy unison with the subject ['Absalom and Achitophel']; and his wealth of language seems to be unlimited. As a didactic poet he perhaps might, with care and meditation, have rivalled Lucretius. Of lyric poets he is the most brilliant and spirit-stirring. He is certainly the best writer of heroic rhyme in our language. The toughest and most knotted parts of the language became ductile at his touch. His versification, . . . while it gave the first model of that neatness and precision which the following generation esteemed so highly, exhibited, at the same time, the last example of nobleness, freedom, variety of pause, and cadence."—*Macaulay*.

"We shall hardly find one of the practitioners of the couplet who is capable of such masterly treatment of the form, of giving to the phrase at once a turn so clear and so individual, of weighting the verse with such dignity and at the same time winging it with such a light-flying speed. . . . The versification of English satire before Dryden had been, almost without exception, harsh and rugged. . . . But Dryden was in no such case. His native gifts and his enormous practice in play-writing had made the couplet as natural a vehicle to him for any form of discourse as blank

verse or plain prose. The form of it, too, which he had most affected was especially suited for satire. In versification the great achievement of Dryden was the alteration of what may be called the balance of the line, causing it to run more quickly and to strike its rhymes with a sharper and less prolonged sound."—*George Saintsbury*.

"The abounding sweep and resilient strength of his versification form another of his prime excellencies, and he may almost be said to have remoulded the English heroic measure, puffing it out to excess, it should be admitted, with triple rhymes and rolling Alexandrines. 'Glorious John,' the master of the full-sounding line."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"He perfected by degrees his mastery of heroic verse, of which later he was to display the capabilities in a way that had never previously been seen and has never since been surpassed. He imparted to the line [heroic verse] a variety, ~~vigor,~~ and sustained majesty of movement such as the verse in its modern form had never previously received."—*J. R. Lounsbury*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The soft complaining flute  
 In dying notes discovers  
 The woes of hopeless lovers,  
 Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.  
 Sharp violins proclaim  
 Their jealous pangs and desperation,  
 Fury, frantic indignation,  
 Depth of pains and heights of passion,  
 For the fair, disdainful dame.  
 But, oh! what art can teach,  
 What human voice can reach,  
 The sacred organ's praise?  
 Notes inspiring holy love,  
 Notes that wing their heavenly ways  
 To mend the choirs above."

—*A Song for St. Cecilia's Day.*

“ The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,  
 Of Bacchus—ever fair and ever young :  
 The jolly god in triumph comes ;  
 Sound the trumpets ; beat the drums :  
 Flush'd with a purple grace  
 He shows his honest face :  
 Now give the hautboys breath. He comes ! he comes !  
 Bacchus ever fair and young,  
 Drinking joys did first ordain ;  
 Bacchus, blessings are a treasure,  
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure :  
 Rich the treasure,  
 Sweet the pleasure,  
 Sweet is pleasure after pain.”—*Alexander's Feast.*

“ High state and honours to others impart,  
 But give me your heart :  
 That treasure, treasure alone,  
 I beg for my own.  
 So gentle a love, so fervent a fire,  
 My soul does inspire ;  
 That treasure, that treasure alone  
 I beg for my own.  
 Your love let me crave ;  
 Give me in possessing  
 So matchless a blessing ;  
 That empire is all I would have.  
 Love's my petition,  
 All my ambition ;  
 If e'er you discover  
 So faithful a lover,  
 So real a flame,  
 I'll die, I'll die,  
 So give up my game.”—*The May Queen.*

4. **Bold Personal Portraiture.**—“ Dryden made his poem [‘ Absalom and Achitophel ’] little more than a string of such portraits, connected together by the very slenderest cord of narrative. . . . The strong antithesis [of his

form] and smart telling hits lent themselves to personal descriptions and attack with consummate ease. . . . His figures are always at once types and individuals. It is to be noticed that, in drawing these satirical portraits, the poet has exercised a singular judgment in selecting his traits."—*George Saintsbury*.

"Now and then, indeed, he seizes a very coarse and marked distinction, and gives us, not a likeness, but a strong caricature, in which a single peculiarity is protruded and everything else is neglected; like the Marquis of Granby at an inn-door, whom we know by nothing but his baldness; or Wilkes, who is Wilkes only in his squint."—*Macaulay*.

"The poem ['Absalom and Achitophel'] really consists of a set of satirical portraits, cut and polished like jewels and flashing malignant light from all their facets. . . . All these [sketches] were drawn at full length with a precision never approached by any of the popular 'character-makers' of the preceding century, and in verse the like of which had never been heard in English for vigorous alternation of thrust and parry."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"Instead of unmeaning caricatures, he presents portraits which cannot be mistaken, however unfavorable ideas they may convey of the originals."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakespeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism; exact without minuteness and lofty without exaggeration. . . . In a few lines is exhibited a character so extensive in its comprehension and so curious in its limitations that nothing can be added, diminished, or referred."—*James Mitford*.

"The thing is to strike the nail on the head and hard, not gracefully. The public must recognize the character, shout their names as they recognize the portraits [in 'Absalom and Achitophel'], applaud the attacks which are made upon them, hurl them from the high rank which they covet."—*Taine*.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,  
For here’s a tun of midnight work to come,  
Og [Shadwell], from a treason tavern rolling home ;  
Round as a globe and liquored every chink,  
Goodly and great, he sails behind his link.  
With all this bulk, there’s nothing lost in Og,  
For every inch that is not fool is rogue :  
A monstrous mass of foul, corrupted matter,  
As all the devils had spewed to make the batter.”

—*Absalom and Achitophel.*

“ A martial hero first, with early care,  
Blown, like the pigmy, by the wind to war.  
A beardless chief, a rebel ere a man :  
So young his hatred to his prince began.  
Next this (how wildly will ambition steer !)  
A vermin wriggling in the Usurper’s ear,  
Bantering his venal wit for sums of gold,  
He cast himself into the saint-like mould,  
Groan’d, sigh’d, and pray’d, while godliness was gain,  
The loudest bagpipe of the squeaking train.”—*The Medal.*

“ Sir Fopling is a fool so nicely writ  
The ladies would mistake him for a wit ;  
And, when he sings, talks loud, and cocks would cry,  
I vow, methinks, he’s pretty company :  
So brisk, so gay, so travell’d, so refined,  
As he took pains to graff upon his kind.  
True fops help nature’s work, and go to school,  
To file and finish God Almighty’s fool.  
Yet none Sir Fopling him or him can call ;  
He’s knight o’ the shire, and represents ye all.  
From each he meets he culls what’er he can ;  
Legion’s his name, a people in a man.”

—*Sir Fopling Flutter.*

**5. Masculine Vigor—Incisiveness—Directness.—**

“ He is the strongest poet of the age of prose, the most vig-



orous verse-man between Milton and Wordsworth. We may say that the muse of Dryden has a contralto and that of Pope a soprano voice."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"There are passages in Dryden's satire in which every couplet has not only the force but the actual sound of a slap in the face. . . . Dryden had a great deal to say, and said it in the plain straightforward fashion which was of all things most likely to be useful for the formation of a workmanlike prose style in English. . . . His political and dramatic practice and the studies which that practice implied provided him with an ample vocabulary, a strong terse method of expression, and a dislike to archaism, vulgarity, or want of clearness."—*George Saintsbury*.

"His words invariably go straight to the mark and not unfrequently with a directness and a force that fully merit the epithet of 'burning' applied to them by the poet Gray. . . . Dryden, who thought clearly and wrote forcibly, who knew always what he had to say and then said it with a directness and a power. . . . So long as men continue to delight in vividness of expression, in majesty of numbers, and in masculine strength and all-abounding vigor, so long will Dryden continue to hold his present high place among English authors."—*T. R. Lounsbury*.

"The occasional poetry of Dryden is marked strongly by masculine character. . . . The vigor and rapidity with which Dryden poured forth his animated satire plainly intimates that his mind was pleased with the exercise of that formidable power. It was more easy for him to write with severity than with forbearance."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"He writes boldly under the pressure of vehement ideas; . . . he writes stirring airs, which shake all the senses, even if they do not sink deep into the heart. Such is his 'Alexander's Feast,' . . . an admirable trumpet-blast, . . . a masterpiece of rapture and of art, which Victor Hugo alone has come up to."—*Taine*.

"Robustness is the great characteristic of Dryden's poetry; he is often excessive, but it is the excess of faculty not of endeavor. Whatever he does is done with solidity and superiority; he dominates his subject and his reader, and effects this by the direct, unlabored expression of himself."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"He is rather an energetic than a feeling writer. He has very little heart and a great deal of nerve."—*Hartley Coleridge*.

"He was thoroughly manly."—*Lowell*.

# ILLUSTRATIONS.

"But thou [Shaftesbury], the pander of the people's hearts,  
O crooked soul, and serpentine in arts,

What curses on thy blasted name will fall!

Which age to age their legacy shall call:

For all must curse the woes that must descend on all.

Religion thou hast none: thy mercury

Has passed through every sect, and theirs through thee.

But what thou giv'st, that venom still remains,

And the poxed nation feel thee in their brains."

—*A Satire against Sedition*.

"Without a vision poets can foreshow

What all but fools by common-sense may know:

If true succession from our isle should fail,

And crowds profane with impious arm prevail,

Not thou, nor those thy factious arts engage,

Shall reap that harvest of rebellious rage,

With which thou flatterest thy decrepit age.

The swelling poison of the several sects

Which, wanting vent, the nation's health infects,

Shall burst its bag; and, fighting out their way,

The various venoms on each other prey.

The presbyter, puff'd up with spiritual pride,

Shall on the necks of the lewd nobles ride:

His brethren damn, the civil power defy,

And parcel out republic prelacy."

—*A Satire against Sedition*.

“ Protect us, mighty Providence,  
 What would these madmen have ?  
 First, they would bribe us without pence,  
 Deceive us without common-sense,  
 And without power enslave.  
 Shall free-born men, in humble awe,  
 Submit to servile shame ;  
 Who from consent and custom draw  
 The same right to be ruled by law,  
 Which kings pretend to reign ? ”

—*On the Young Statesman.*

✓ 6. Point.—“ He has antithesis, ornamental epithets, finely wrought comparisons, and all the artifices of the literary mind. . . . He contrasts ideas with ideas, phrases with phrases. . . . Closer ideas, more marked contrasts, bolder images, only add weight to the argument. . . . He has vigorous periods, reflective antithesis.”—*Taine*.

“ The flippancy extravagance of point and quibble in which, complying with his age, he had hitherto indulged.”—*Sir Walter Scott*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ From hence began that plot, the nation's curse,  
 Bad in itself, but represented worse ;  
 Raised in extremes and in extremes decried ;  
 With oaths affirm'd, with dying vows denied ;  
 Not weigh'd nor winnow'd by the multitude ;  
 But swallow'd in the mass, unchew'd and crude.  
 Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies,  
 To please the fools and puzzle all the wise.  
 Succeeding times did equal folly call,  
 Believing nothing or believing all.”

—*Absalom and Achitophel.*

“ Unblamed for life, ambition set aside,  
 Not stain'd with cruelty, not puff'd with pride.  
 How happy had he been if destiny  
 Had higher placed his birth or not so high !

His kingly virtues might have gain'd a throne,  
And bless'd all other countries but his own.  
But charming greatness, since so few refuse  
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse."

—*Absalom and Achitophel.*

"Thine be the laurel then; thy blooming age  
Can best, if any can, support the stage;  
Which so declines that shortly we may see  
Players and plays reduced to second infancy.  
Sharp to the world but thoughtless of renown,  
They plot not on the stage but on the town,  
And, in despair their empty pit to fill,  
Set up some foreign monster in a bill.  
Thus they jog on, still tricking, never thriving,  
And murdering plays, which they miscall reviving."

—*Epistle to Mr. Granville.*

✓ 7. **Specious Argument in Verse.**—"Dryden had a faculty of specious argument in verse which, if it falls short of the great Roman's [Lucretius] in logical exactitude, hardly falls short of it in poetical ornament, and excels it in a sort of triumphant vivacity which hurries the reader along whether he will or no. . . . Dryden's didactic poems are quite unlike anything which came before them, and have never been approached by anything that has come after them. Doubtless they prove nothing; . . . but at the same time they have a remarkable air of proving something. He was at all times singularly happy and fertile in the art of illustration and of concealing the weakness of an argument in the most convincing way by a happy smile or jest. A poet whose greatest triumphs were won in the fields of satire and of argumentative verse, Dryden had, in reality, a considerable touch of the scholastic in his mind."—*George Saintsbury.*

"If he took up an opinion in the morning, he would have found so many arguments for it by night that it would seem already old and familiar. . . . But the charm of this great advocate is that, whatever side he was on, he could always find

reasons for it and state them with great force and with abundance of happy illustration. . . . It is Dryden's excuse that his characteristic excellence is to argue persuasively and powerfully, whether in verse or in prose, and that he was amply endowed with the most needful quality of an advocate—to be strongly and wholly of his present way of thinking, whatever it might be. . . . One of the great charms of his best writing is that everything seems struck off at a heat, as by a superior man in the best mood of his talk."—*Lowell*.

"The distinguishing characteristic of Dryden's genius seems to have been the power of reasoning and expressing the result in appropriate language. . . . The skill with which they [his arguments] are stated, elucidated, enforced, and exemplified ever commands our admiration, though in the result our reason may reject their influence. . . . His arguments, even in the worst cause, bear witness to the energy of his mental conceptions."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"Dryden was an incomparable reasoner in verse. . . . His logic is by no means uniformly sound. . . . His arguments, therefore, often are worthless, but the manner in which they are stated is beyond all praise."—*Macaulay*.

"He could not restrain himself from argument and satire on a subject that would have induced most youthful poets to luxuriate in elegiac complaints."—*James Mitford*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"If, then, our faith we for our guide admit,  
Vain is the further search of human wit,  
As when the building gains a surer stay,  
We take the unuseful scaffolding away.  
Reason by sense no more can understand ;  
The game is played into another hand ;  
Why choose we then, like bilanders, to creep  
Along the coast, and land in view to keep,  
When safely we may launch into the deep ?"

—*The Hind and the Panther*.

“ For granting we have sinn’d, and that the offence  
Of man is made against Omnipotence,  
Some price that bears proportion must be paid,  
And infinite with infinite be weigh’d. .  
See, then, the Deist lost : remorse for vice  
Not paid, or paid inadequate to price :  
What farther means can Reason now direct,  
Or what relief from human wit expect ?  
That shows us sick ; and sadly are we sure  
Still to be sick, till Heaven reveal the cure :  
If then Heaven’s will must needs be understood,  
(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good),  
Let all records of will revealed be shown ;  
With Scripture all in equal balance thrown,  
And our one sacred book will be that one.”

—*Religio Laici.*

“ If those who gave the sceptre could not tie  
By their own deed their own posterity,  
How then could Adam bind his future race ?  
How could his forfeit on mankind take place ?  
Or how could heavenly justice damn us all,  
Who ne’er consented to our father’s fall ?  
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,  
And tenants to their people’s pleasure stand.  
Add, that the power for property allow’d  
Is mischievously seated in the crowd ;  
For who can be secure of private right,  
If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might ? ”

—*Absalom and Achitophel.*

## 8. Excessive Panegyric—Adulation—Bombast.—

“ He had a tendency to bombast, which, though subsequently corrected by time and thought, was never wholly removed. No writer, it must be owned, has carried the flattery of dedication to a greater length. . . . But this was not, we suspect, merely interested servility : it was the overflowing of a mind singularly disposed to admiration—of a mind which diminished vices and magnified virtues and obligations.

Bombast is his prevailing vice—the exaggeration which disfigures the panegyrics of Dryden.”—*Macaulay*.

“He seems to have made flattery too cheap. . . . He appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expense, however lavish. . . . The extreme flattery of Dryden’s dedications has been objected to as a fault of an opposite description ; and perhaps no writer has equalled him in the profusion and elegance of his adulation. . . . He considers the great as entitled to encomiastic homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift. . . . In the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has ever been equalled, except by Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn.”—*Samuel Johnson*.

“Dryden was one of the most accomplished flatterers that ever lived.”—*George Saintsbury*.

“Although it [‘Tyrannic Love’] is perhaps his best heroic play, it errs on the side of rant and bombast to such a degree that the poet felt obliged to apologize for this in the prologue.”—*Edmund Gosse*.

“Here lovers vie with each other in metaphors ; there a lover, in order to magnify the beauty of his mistress, says that bloody hearts lie panting in her hands.”—*Taine*.

“Perhaps no writer has equalled him in the profusion and elegance of his adulation.”—*Sir Walter Scott*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Next to the sacred temple you are led,  
Where waits a crown for your most sacred head :  
How justly from the Church that crown is due,  
Preserved from ruin, and restored by you !  
The grateful choir their harmony employ,  
Not to make greater but more solemn joy.  
Wrapt soft and warm, your name is sent on high, •  
As flames do on the wings of insects fly :

Music herself is lost ; in vain she brings  
 Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings :  
 Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,  
 And lie like bees in their own sweetness drown'd.  
 He that brought peace, all discord could atone,  
 His name is music of itself alone."

—*To Charles the Second.*

" When factious rage to cruel exile drove  
 The queen of beauty and the court of love,  
 The muses drooped with their forsaken arts,  
 And the sad cupids broke their useless darts :

. . . . .

But now the illustrious nymph, returned again,  
 Brings every grace triumphant in her train.  
 The wond'ring Nereids, though they raised no storm,  
 Foreslow'd her passage, to behold her form :  
 Some cried, ' A Venus ! ' some, ' A Thetis pass'd ! '  
 But this was not so fair nor that so chaste."

—*To the Duchess of York on Her Return.*

" Nature gave him, a child, what men in vain  
 Oft strive, by art though further'd, to obtain.  
 His body was an orb, his sublime soul  
 Did move on virtue's and on learning's pole :  
 Whose regular motions better to our view,  
 Than Archimedes' sphere, the heavens did shew.  
 Graces and virtues, languages and arts,  
 Beauty and learning fill'd up all the parts.  
 Heaven's gifts, which do like falling stars appear  
 Scatter'd in others ; all, as in their sphere.  
 Were fix'd conglobate in his soul ; and thence  
 Shone through his body, with sweet influence ;  
 Letting their glories so on each one fall,  
 The whole frame rendered was celestial."

—*The Death of Lord Hastings.*

✓ 9. Coarseness—Sensuality.—Dryden has been universally condemned for pandering to the depraved tastes of



the age and court. While his later and better work is less open to the charge of coarseness, yet some of it, like the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel," contains, as Saintsbury says, "some of his greatest licenses of expression."

"The license of his comedy . . . had for it only the apology of universal example, and must be lamented though not excused. . . . Dryden's indelicacy is like the forced impudence of a bashful man." — *Sir Walter Scott*.

"The characters in Dryden's plays are nothing but gross, selfish, unblushing, lying libertines of both sexes. . . . The comic characters are, without mixture, loathsome and despicable." — *Macaulay*.

"He squatted clumsily in the filth in which others simply sported. . . . He made himself petulant of set purpose. Nothing is more nauseous than studied lewdness, and Dryden studied everything, even pleasantness and politeness." — *Taine*.

"His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness and abject adulation; but they were probably like his merriment, artificial and constrained—the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure. Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal nor excuse the depravity. Such degradation of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation." — *Samuel Johnson*.

"The coarseness of Dryden's plays is unpardonable. . . . It is deliberate, it is unnecessary, it is a positive defect in art." — *George Saintsbury*.

"Dryden's satire is often coarse, but where it is coarsest it is commonly in defence of himself against attacks that were themselves brutal." — *Lowell*.

Those who care to seek illustrations of Dryden's coarseness will find striking instances in his "Absalom and Achitophel," Book I., lines 1 to 10, and Book II., lines 467 to 480, in his "Epistle to Mr. Southern," and in his extant plays.

**10. Pedantry—Vanity.**—If Dryden mostly wanted that inspiration which comes of belief in and devotion to something nobler and more abiding than the present moment and its petulant need, he had at least the next best thing to that—a thorough faith in himself. . . . He is always handsomely frank in telling us whatever of his own doing pleased him."—*Lowell*.

"He never forgets that, as Matthew Arnold has said, he is the puissant and glorious founder of our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century—that is to say, of an age of prose and reason."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"Certainly 'modest' and 'diffident' are not exactly the adjectives for those qualities which one discerns as uppermost in the writings, verse and prose, of 'Glorious John,' the master of the 'full-resounding' line. . . . There is a great deal of self-assertion and an overbearing contempt and brow-beating of other men, their persons, intellect, performances, and opinions."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"He descends to display his knowledge with pedantic ostentation. . . . His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance. . . . He had a vanity unworthy of his abilities, to show, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words which had then crept into conversation. . . . His faults of negligence are beyond recital. What he thought sufficient he did not stop to make better, and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that his good lines would overbalance the bad."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"And so he translated Virgil not only into English but into Dryden; and so he was kind enough to translate Chaucer

too, as an example, . . . and cheated the readers of the old 'Knight's Tale' of sundry of their tears."—*Mrs. Browning.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Let this suffice : nor thou, great saint, refuse  
This humble tribute of no vulgar muse ;  
Who, not by cares or wants or age depress'd,  
Stems a wild deluge with a dauntless breast ;  
And dares to sing thy praises in a clime  
Where vice triumphs, and virtue is a crime ;  
Where even to draw the picture of thy mind  
Is satire on the most of human kind :  
Take it, while yet 'tis praise ; before my rage,  
Unsafely just, break loose on this bad age ;  
So bad that thou thyself hadst no defence  
From vice but barely by departing hence."—*Eleonora.*

"Our author, by experience, finds it true,  
'Tis much more hard to please himself than you :  
And out of no feign'd modesty, this day  
Damns his laborious trifle of a play :  
Not that it's worse than what before he writ ;  
But he has now another taste of wit ;  
And, to confess a truth, though out of time,  
Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.  
Passions too fierce to be in fetters bound,  
And nature flies him like enchanted ground :  
What verse can do, he has performed in this,  
Which he presumes the most correct of his ;  
But spite of all his pride, a secret shame  
Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name."  
—*Prologue to Aurengzebe.*

"Dulness is decent in the church and state.  
But I forget that still 't is understood,  
Bad plays are best described by showing good.  
Sit silent then, that my pleased soul may see  
A judging audience once, and worthy me ;

My faithful scene from true records shall tell,  
How Trojan valour did the Greek excel ;  
Your great forefathers shall their fame regain,  
And Homer's angry ghost repine in vain."

—*Prologue to Troilus and Cressida.*

**II. Precision—Mastery of Language.**—"He had, beyond most, the gift of the right word. And if he does not, like one or two of the great masters of song, stir one's sympathies by that indefinable aroma so magical in arousing the subtle associations of the soul, he has this in common with the few great writers, the winged seeds of his thoughts embed themselves in the memory and germinate there. . . . But his strong sense, his command of the happy word, his wit, which is distinguished by a certain breadth and, as it were, power of generalization, as Pope's by keenness of edge and point, were his whether he would or no. . . . Pithy sentences and phrases always drop from Dryden's pen as if unawares."—*Lowell.*

"He was the first writer under whose skillful management the scientific vocabulary fell into natural and pleasing verse."—*Macaulay.*

"No English poet, perhaps no English writer, has attained as regards expression such undisputed excellence."—*James Mitford.*

"Great Dryden next whose tuneful muse affords

The sweetest numbers and the fittest words."—*Addison.*

"Dryden purifies his own [style] and renders it more clear by introducing close reasoning and precise words. . . . He bounds it [his thought] with exact terms justified by the dictionary, with simple constructions justified by the grammar, that the reader may have at every step a method of verification and a source of clearness."—*Taine.*

"The felicity of his language, the richness of his illustrations, and the depth of his reflections, often supplied what the scene wanted in natural passion."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Three poets in three distant ages born  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.  
The first in loftiness of thought surpass’d ;  
The next in majesty ; in both the last.  
The force of nature could no further go ;  
To make a third she join’d the former two.”

—*Under the Portrait of John Milton.*

“Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease,  
No action leave to busy chronicles :  
Such, whose supine felicity but makes  
In story chasms, in epoch mistakes ;  
O’er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,  
Till with his silent sickle they are mown.”

—*Astræa Redux.*

“Whatever happy region is thy place,  
Cease thy celestial song a little space ;  
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,  
Since heaven’s eternal year is thine.  
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,  
In no ignoble verse ;  
But such as thy own voice did practise here,  
When thy first fruits of poesy were given ;  
To make thyself a welcome inmate there :  
While yet a young probationer,  
And candidate of heaven.”

—*An Ode to Mrs. Anne Killigrew.*

## POPE, 1688-1744

**Biographical Outline.**—Alexander Pope, born in Lombard Street, London, May 21, 1688; father a Roman Catholic linen draper, in comfortable circumstances, who lived, after 1700, at Binfield in Windsor Forest; Pope is a precocious child, and is nicknamed "the little nightingale" because of the sweetness of his voice; in his eighth year he begins Latin and Greek with a priest as tutor, and in his ninth year he enters a Roman Catholic school at Twyford, near Winchester; later he attends school at Marylebone and at Hyde Park Corner; he was remembered at Twyford because he was once whipped for satirizing the master; in his eleventh year a severe illness, brought on "by perpetual application," ruins his health and distorts his figure; after a few months at school he returns to his father's home, and is placed for a time under another priest-tutor, but is soon left to pursue his studies entirely by himself; he reads voraciously and, according to his own statement, studies Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and the English poets with as much zest as "a boy gathering flowers;" he begins early to imitate his favorite authors, and in his twelfth year makes "a kind of play" from Olgiby's translation of Homer, which is acted by his school-fellows; he "does nothing but read and write;" during 1701-1703 he writes an epic poem entitled "Alexander," which he burns in 1717, with Atterbury's approval; about 1702 (when he is but fourteen) he makes also a translation from Statius, which he published in 1712; during his boyhood he also makes several other translations from the classics and from Chaucer.

In his fifteenth year he goes to London to study French

and Italian, but too severe application brings on an illness nearly fatal ; he regains health through daily rides, and early begins to court the acquaintance of men of letters, who generally receive him with encouragement ; he is especially aided by Sir William Trumbull, William Walsh, and Wycherley ; he writes his "Pastorals" before he is eighteen, and publishes one of them in 1706, at the request of Tonson ; he is much influenced by Wycherley, eighteen years his senior, whom Pope says he followed about "like a dog ;" he becomes first known to the literary world in general through the publication of his "Pastorals" in 1709 ; these are favorably received, and in May, 1711, he publishes, anonymously, his "Essay on Criticism ;" the "Essay" is satirized by Dennis, but is praised by Addison, whom Pope soon afterward meets through the good offices of Steele, already an acquaintance of Pope's ; his "Messiah" is first published May 14, 1712, in the *Spectator* ; during the same year his "Rape of the Lock" and some of his minor poems appear in the "Miscellanies," published by Lintot ; "The Rape of the Lock" is warmly praised by Addison, and is revised, greatly enlarged, and published by itself in 1714, adding much to Pope's reputation.

In March, 1712-13, he publishes his "Cooper's Hill," partly written during boyhood, which, by its political character, wins for Pope the friendship of Swift ; he also writes the prologue for Addison's "Cato," which was produced April 13, 1713, but, through literary intrigues most discreditable to Pope, his friendliness toward Addison is soon turned into hatred ; about this time he is introduced by Swift to Arbuthnot, and with these two and Gay, Parnell, Congreve, and others, he helps to form the famous "Scriblerus Club ;" in October, 1713, after encouragement by Addison, Swift, and many others, Pope publishes proposals for a translation of Homer's "Iliad ;" the proposal is received with enthusiasm by both Whig and Tory writers, and the first four books of Pope's "Iliad" appear in 1715 ; other volumes follow in 1716, 1717,

1718, and two in 1720 ; all six volumes are sold for a guinea each, and the first edition brings to Pope the unprecedented sum of £5,000, thus making him financially independent for life ; a contemporary translation of the first book of the " Iliad " by Tickell is attributed by Pope to Addison, and this probably gave rise to Pope's stricture on his former friend ending with the famous couplet,

" Who but must laugh if such a man there be ?  
Who would not weep if Atticus were he ? "

By the time of the publication of the sixth volume of his " Iliad," Pope had become acknowledged as the leader among Englishmen of letters then living ; although his Greek scholarship was known to be somewhat superficial, his literary and financial success gave him high social rank, and he became a welcome guest at many noble houses ; in April, 1716, his father's family leave Binfield and settle in Chiswick, near many of Pope's aristocratic friends ; his father dies in 1717, and in 1719 Pope buys the lease of a house with five acres of land at Twickenham, where he resides during the rest of his life ; he invests in the famous South Sea scheme, sells out before the collapse, and makes some money by the speculation ; about 1719 he begins his famous correspondence with Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Martha Blount, both of whom had great influence on Pope's life ; the popular report of his love-affair, based on his " Lines to an Unfortunate Lady " (published with other poems in 1717), is now known to have been entirely unfounded ; the volume published in 1717 contained his " Eloisa and Abelard " and his " Ode on St. Cecilia's Day ; " in 1722 occurs his famous and bitter quarrel with Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who then lived near him at Twickenham—a quarrel supposed to have grown out of contempt manifested by the lady toward Pope after a supposed declaration of love on his part ; his relations with Martha



and Teresa Blount, his friends and neighbors, continued for years, and seem to have been purely platonic.

In 1722 Pope edits the poems of Parnell, and begins for Tonson an edition of Shakespeare, which is published in 1725 with little success; about 1724 Pope begins his translation of the "Odyssey," aided by William Broome and by Elijah Fenton, who translates twelve of the twenty-four books; three volumes of the "Odyssey" were published in 1725, and two more in 1727, the whole bringing to Pope about £3,800; a bitter quarrel results with Broome, who was dissatisfied with his share of the profits, and who was later attacked by Pope in his "Bathos;" in 1725, when Bolingbroke returns from exile, he settles at Danley, near Twickenham, and renews his intimacy with Pope; in the summer of 1726 Swift visits London on Pope's invitation, and Pope arranges for the publication of "Gulliver's Travels;" about this time Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, Lord Oxford, Swift, and Pope unite in writing three volumes of "Miscellanies," two volumes of which were published in June, 1727; Swift is Pope's guest again in 1727; the third volume of the "Miscellanies" is published in March, 1727-28, and contains Pope's satire "Bathos;" it is supposed that Pope intended in "Bathos" to irritate the future victims of his "Dunciad" into retorts, and the satire had that effect; the "Dunciad" appeared May 28, 1728, and was published anonymously, purporting to have been addressed to a friend of Pope's in answer to the attacks provoked by "Bathos;" a second edition of the "Dunciad" appeared in 1729, but the poem was not acknowledged till it appeared among Pope's works in 1735.

Stung by the retorts of the victims of the "Dunciad," Pope founds, anonymously, the *Grub Street Journal*, and continues it until 1737; he is induced to withdraw from this dirty warfare by Bolingbroke, whom he revered, and together they plan an elaborate series of poems; the result is Pope's "Essay on Man" and his "Moral Essays;" the first

of the "Moral Essays"—that on Taste—was published in 1731, and the second—on Riches—and third—on the Characters of Men—in 1733; the fourth—on the Characters of Women—was written as early as 1733, but was not published till 1735; the first part of the "Essay on Man" appeared in 1733 and the second in 1734, both anonymously; Bolingbroke is supposed to have supplied "the philosophic stamina" of the "Essay on Man;" the "Universal Prayer" was added to the "Essay" in 1738; at Bolingbroke's suggestion, in 1733, Pope translates the first Satire of the second Book of Horace "in a morning or two," and it is published soon afterward; a gross insult to Lady Mary Wortley Montague contained in the satire leads to another bitter quarrel between Pope and her friends, and results in Pope's famous "Letter to a Noble Lord" (suppressed during his life) and in his "Epistle to Arbuthnot," published in January, 1734-35, which is now regarded as Pope's masterpiece; after a series of most elaborate and contemptible manœuvres on his part, Pope's correspondence is published in May, 1737, and the imaginary correspondence there attributed to Addison, Steele, and Congreve produces for years in the public mind the utmost confusion as to the relations of these four men of letters; Pope's deception in this whole matter was accidentally discovered over a century later; the publication of Pope's letter to Swift, in 1741, was the outcome of a still more disgusting intrigue on Pope's part, in which he had multiplied falsehood upon falsehood; his changing political opinions at this period are portrayed in his "Epistle to Augustus," which was published in March, 1737; he had been visited by the Prince of Wales two years before, and his two dialogues, called eventually "Epilogues to the Satires," published in 1738, were written in answer to an attack on the Government.

After Bolingbroke retired to France in 1736, his place as Mentor to Pope was taken by Warburton, who had defended Pope in a series of letters replying to strictures upon the

"Essay on Man;" Pope and Warburton visit Oxford together in 1741, and the degree of D.C.L. is offered to Pope, but he declines it because a proposed D.D. is refused to Warburton; at Warburton's suggestion Pope now undertakes to complete the "Dunciad" with a fourth book, which is published in March, 1742; it is not received with favor, and a criticism of it by Colley Cibber in his "Rehearsal" leads to another bitter personal quarrel; a complete edition of the "Dunciad," with notes by Warburton, was published in 1742, and contained several changes, including the substitution of Cibber for Theobald as the hero of the poem and the attack on Bentley; Pope spends much of his time during his last three years in visiting at country-houses; he revises his works, and again entertains Bolingbroke at Twickenham; he dies at Twickenham, May 30, 1744, and is buried in Twickenham church; to Martha Blount, who had been attentive to his comfort till the last, he leaves £1,000 and the income from his property during her life.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

✓ **1. Conciseness — Terseness — Exactness.**—"I chose verse," says Pope in his 'Design of an Essay on Man,' "because I could express them [ideas] more shortly this way than in prose itself."

"If the ideas are mediocre, the art of expressing them is truly marvellous. . . . Every word is effective; every passage must be read slowly; every epithet is an epitome; a more condensed style was never written. . . . Never was familiar knowledge expressed in words more effective, in style more condensed, in melody more sweet, in contrasts more striking, in embellishments more blazing. [His style is characterized as] refined, ornate, antithetical, pointed, terse, regular, graceful, musical."—*Taine*.

"One can open upon wit and epigram at any page. Indeed, I think that one gets a little tired of the invariable *this* set off by the inevitable *that*, and wishes antithesis would let him have a little quiet now and then. . . . In all of these [quotations] we notice that terseness in which (regard being had to his especial range of thought) Pope has never been excelled. . . . The 'Essay on Man' proves only two things beyond a question—that Pope was not a great thinker and that, wherever he found a thought, no matter what, he could express it so tersely, so clearly, and with such smoothness of versification, as to give it everlasting currency. . . . The accuracy on which Pope prided himself, and for which he is commended, was not accuracy of thought so much as of expression."—*Lowell*.

"There is something charming even to an enemy's ear in this exquisite balancing of sounds and phrases, these 'shining rows' of oppositions and appositions, this glorifying of com-

monplaces by antithetic processes, this catching in the rebound, of emphasis upon rhyme and rhyme; all, in short, of this Indian jugglery and Indian carving upon cherry-stones!"—*Mrs. Browning*.

"Pope has regularly crowded the utmost thought into the smallest space. This is the principle of his method. How many judicious and pointed remarks, eternally true, do I glean when reading his works, and how they are expressed in a brief, concise, elegant manner, once for all!"—*St. Beuve*.

"The charm of Pope's best passages, when it does not rest upon his Dutch picturesqueness of touch, is due to the intellectual pleasure given by his adroit and stimulating manner of producing his ideas and by the astonishing exactitude and propriety of his phrase. When it is all summed up, we may not be much wiser, but we are sure to be much the brighter and alerter."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"The portraits in Pope's 'Essay on Man' are masterpieces of English versification, medals cut with such sharp outlines and such vigor of hand that they have lost none of their freshness by lapse of time. . . . Pope's wit is of that perfect kind which does not seem to be sought for its own sake but to be the appropriate vehicle for the meaning. We are not made to feel that he is constraining himself to write in couplets, but that his couplets are the shape in which he can best make his thoughts tell."—*Mark Pattison*.

"When Pope is at his best every word tells. His precision and firmness of touch enable him to get the greatest possible meaning into a narrow compass."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had nothing left to be forgiven. . . . The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply."—*Samuel Johnson*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Pleasures the sex, as children birds, pursue,  
Still out of reach, yet never out of view ;  
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the toy at most,  
To covet flying and regret when lost :

. . . . .

See how the world its veterans rewards !  
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards ;  
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,  
Young without lovers, old without a friend ;  
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot."

—*The Rape of the Lock.*

Great Nature spoke ; observant men obey'd ;  
Cities were built, societies were made :  
Here rose a little state ; another near  
Grew by like means, and join'd through love or fear.  
Did here the trees with ruddier burthens bend,  
And there the streams in purer rills descend ?  
What war could ravish, commerce could bestow,  
And he returned a friend, who came a foe.  
Converse and love, mankind may strongly draw,  
When love was liberty, and nature law.  
Thus states were formed ; the name of king unknown,  
Till common interest placed the sway in one.  
'Twas VIRTUE ONLY (or in arts or arms,  
Diffusing blessings, or averting harms),  
The same which in a sire the sons obey'd,  
A prince the father of a people made."

—*Essay on Man.*

" Happy the man whose wish and care  
A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air  
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,  
Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find  
 Hours days and years slide soft away  
 In health of body, peace of mind,  
 Quiet by day."—*Ode on Solitude.*

**2. Point—Balance—Epigram.**—"The antitheses follow each other in couples like a succession of columns; thirteen couples form a suite; and the last is raised above the rest by a word, which concentrates and combines all."—*Taine.*

"Pope must be allowed to have established a style of his own, in which he is without a rival. . . . In other hands this prolongation of the same form is tame; in Pope's it interests us, so much variety is there in the arrangement and the adornments. In one place the antithesis is comprised in a single line, in another it occupies two; now it is in the substantives, now in the adjectives and verbs; now only in the ideas; now it penetrates the sound and position of the words. In vain we see it reappear; we are not wearied, because each time it adds somewhat to our idea, and shows us the object in a new light."—*Lowell.*

"The 'Essay on Criticism' is like a metrical multiplication table. It required very little reading of the French textbooks to find the maxims which Pope has here strung together. But he has dressed them so neatly and turned them out with such sparkle and point that these truisms have acquired a weight not their own."—*De Quincey.*

"They [the artificial poets] could not mean greatly, but such meaning as they had they labored to express in the most terse and pointed form which our language is capable of. It is not poets, they were literary artists. They showed that a couplet can do the work of a page and a single line produce effects which, in the infancy of writing, would require sentences."—*Mark Pattison.*



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ See the same man, in vigour, in the gout ;  
 Alone, in company ; in place, or out ;  
 Early at business, and at hazard late ;  
 Mad at a fox-chase, wise at a debate ;  
 Drunk at a borough, civil at a ball ;  
 Friendly at Hackney, faithless at Whitehall.”

—*Moral Essays.*

“ But where’s the man who counsel can bestow,  
 Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know ?  
 Unbias’d, or by favour or by spite ;  
 Not dully prepossessed, not blindly right ;  
 Though learn’d, well-bred ; and though well-bred, sincere ;  
 Modestly bold, and humanly severe ;  
 Who to a friend his faults can freely show,  
 And gladly praise the merit of a foe ?  
 Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined ;  
 A knowledge both of books and human kind.”

—*Essay on Criticism.*

“ Of manners gentle, of affections mild ;  
 In wit a man, simplicity, a child ;  
 With native humour tempering virtuous rage,  
 Form’d to delight at once and lash the age.  
 Above temptation, in a low estate,  
 And uncorrupted even among the great :  
 A safe companion, and an easy friend,  
 Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end.”

—*Epitaph on Gay.*

**3. Melody.**—“ In two directions, in that of condensing and pointing his meaning and in that of drawing the utmost harmony of sound out of the couplet, Pope carried versification far beyond the point at which it was when he took it up. Because, after Pope, this trick of versification became common property, and ‘ every warbler had his tune by heart,’ we

are apt to overlook the merit of the first invention. . . . We have [in the quotation below] twenty-four lines (eleven in the Greek) of finished versification, the rapid, facile, and melodious flow of which, concentrating all the felicities of Pope's higher style, has never been surpassed in English poetry."—*Mark Pattison*.

"The troops, exulting, sat in order round,  
And beaming fires illumined all the ground.  
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,  
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,  
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;  
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole,  
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,  
And tip with silver every mountain's head."

—*Translation of the Iliad.*

"To Pope the English language will always be indebted. He, more than any other before or since, discovered its power of melody, enriched it with poetical elegances, with happy combinations."—*Taine*.

"Again, your verse is orderly—and more—  
'The waves behind impel the waves before;'  
Monotonously musical they glide,  
Till couplet unto couplet hath replied."

—*Andrew Lang.*

"He gave the most striking examples of his favorite theory, that 'sound should seem an echo to the sense.' He carried out the improvement in diction which Dryden commenced; and while Addison was producing beautiful specimens of reformed prose, Pope gave a polish and point to verse before unknown."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Now under hanging mountains,  
 Beside the falls of fountains,  
 Or where Hebrus wanders,  
 Rolling in meanders,  
     All alone,  
     Unheard, unknown,  
     He makes his moan ;  
     And calls her ghost,  
     For ever, ever, ever lost !  
 Now with furies surrounded,  
 Despairing, confounded,  
 He trembles, he glows,  
 Amidst Rhodope's snows :  
 See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies ;  
 Hark ! Haemus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries  
                     Ah see, he dies ! "

—*Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.*

" Hark ! they whisper ; angels say,  
     ' Sister spirit, come away ! '

What is this absorbs me quite ?  
 Steals my senses, shuts my sight,  
 Drowns my spirits, draws my breath ?  
 Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

The world recedes, it disappears !  
 Heaven opens on my eyes ! my ears  
     With sounds seraphic ring :  
 Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !  
 O Grave ! where is thy victory ?  
 O Death ! where is thy sting ? "

—*The Dying Christian to His Soul.*

" But now secure the painted vessel glides,  
 The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides  
 While melting music steals upon the sky,  
 And soften'd sounds along the waters die ;

Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,  
 Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay—  
 All but the sylph ; with careful thoughts opprest,  
 The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.  
 He summons straight his denizens of air ;  
 The lucid squadrons round the sails repair :  
 Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe,  
 That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath."

— *The Rape of the Lock.*

**4. Artificiality.**—"Dryden and Pope are the great masters of the artificial style of poetry in our language. . . . If, indeed, by a great poet we mean one who gives the utmost grandeur to our conceptions of nature, or the utmost force to the passions of the heart, Pope was not in this sense a great poet ; for the bent, the characteristic power of his mind, lay the clean contrary way : namely, in representing things as they appear to the indifferent observer, stripped of prejudice and passion, as in his Critical Essays ; or in representing them in the most contemptible and insignificant point of view, as in his Satires ; or in clothing the little with mock dignity, as in his poems of Fancy ; or in adorning the trivial incidents and familiar relations of life with the utmost elegance of expression. . . . He was not distinguished as a poet of lofty enthusiasm, of strong imagination, with a passionate sense of the beauties of nature, or a deep insight into the workings of the heart ; but he was a wit and a critic, a man of sense, of observation, and of the world, with a keen relish for the elegances of art, . . . a quick tact for propriety of thought and manners as established by the forms and customs of society. . . . He was, in a word, the poet, not of nature, but of art. . . . He saw nature only dressed by art ; he judged of beauty by fashion ; he sought for truth in the opinions of the world ; he judged of the feelings of others by his own. . . . Pope's muse never wandered with safety but from his library to his grotto or from his grotto into his li-

brary back again. . . . He could describe the faultless, whole-length mirror that reflected his own person better than the smooth surface of the lake that reflects the face of heaven, a piece of cut glass or a pair of paste buckles with more brilliance and effect than a thousand dew-drops glittering in the sun. He would be more delighted with a patent lamp than with the 'pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.' . . . That which was nearest to him was the greatest: the fashion of the day bore sway in his mind over the immutable laws of nature. . . . His mind was the antithesis of strength and grandeur; its power was the power of indifference. He had none of the enthusiasm of poetry; he was in poetry what the skeptic is in religion. . . . For rocks and seas and mountains he gives us artificial grass-plats, gravel walks, and tinkling rills: for earth-quakes and tempests, the breaking of a flower-pot or the fall of a china jar."—*William Hazlitt*.

"I admire Pope in the very highest degree; but I admire him as a pyrotechnic artist for producing brilliant and evanescent effects out of elements that have hardly a moment's life within them. There is a flash and a startling explosion; then there is a dazzling coruscation; all purple and gold; the eye aches under the suddenness of a display that, springing like a burning arrow out of darkness, rushes back into darkness with arrowy speed, and in a moment all is over. . . . But Pope was all jets and tongues of flame; all showers of scintillation and sparkle. . . . To Pope we owe it that we can now claim a . . . pre-eminence in the sportive and aerial graces of the mock-heroic and satiric muse."—*De Quincey*.

"As truly as Shakespeare is the poet of man as God made him, dealing with great passions and innate motives, so truly is Pope the poet of society, the delineator of manners, the expositor of those motives which may be called acquired, whose spring is in institutions and habits of purely worldly origin. . . . Pope's style is the apotheosis of clearness, point,

technical skill, or the ease that comes of practice, not of the fulness of original power. . . . He stands for exactness of intellectual expression, for perfect propriety of phrase (I speak of him at his best), and is a striking instance how much success and permanence of reputation depend on conscientious finish as well as on native endowment. . . . But the defect of this kind of criticism was that it ignored imagination altogether, and sent Nature about her business as an impertinent baggage, whose household loom competed unlawfully with the machine-made fabrics, so exquisitely uniform in pattern of the royal manufactories. . . . Even poor old Dennis himself had arrived at a kind of muddled notion that artifice was not precisely art, that there were depths in human nature which the most perfectly manufactured line of five feet could not sound."—*Lowell*.

"He has no romance, no spirituality, no mystery, and the highest regions of poetry he never so much as dreams of; but in the lower regions there is perhaps no single writer who showers fine things about him with such a prodigality of wit, or dazzles us so much with the mere exercise of his intelligence."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"Pope has no dash, no naturalness or manliness; he has no more ideas than passions—at least such ideas as a man feels it necessary to write, and in connection with which we lose thought of words. Religious controversy and party quarrels resound about him; he studiously avoids them; amidst all these shocks his chief care is to preserve his writing-desk. . . . In reality he did not write because he thought, but thought in order to write; manuscript, and the noise it makes in the world when printed, was his idol; if he wrote verses, it was merely for the sake of doing so. . . . The last scene [of the 'Dunciad'] ends with noise, cymbals and trombones, crackers and fire-works. As for me, I carry away from this celebrated entertainment only the remembrance of a hubbub. Unwittingly I have counted the lights, I know the machinery,

I have touched the toilsome stage-property of apparitions and allegories. I bid farewell to the scene-painter, the machinist, the manager of literary effects, and go elsewhere to find the poet. . . . Pope's most perfect poems are those made up of precepts and arguments. Artifice in these is less shocking than elsewhere. . . . A great writer is a man who, having passions, knows his dictionary and his grammar; Pope thoroughly knew his dictionary and his grammar, but stopped there. . . . The most correct and formal of men. . . . These caricatures seem strange to us, but do not amuse. The wit is no wit: all is calculated, combined, artificially prepared."—*Taine*.

"Pope's muse had left the free forest for Will's coffee-house, and haunted ladies' boudoirs instead of the brakes of the enchanted island. Her wings were clogged with 'gums and pomatums,' and her 'thin essence' had shrunk 'like a rivell'd flower.' . . . Nature has, for him, ceased to be inhabited by sylphs and fairies, except to amuse the fancies of fine ladies and gentlemen, and has not yet received a new interest from the fairy tales of science. . . . Pope always resembles an orator whose gestures are studied, and who thinks while he is speaking of the fall of his robes and the attitude of his hand. He is throughout academical; and though knowing with admirable nicety how grief should be represented, and what have been the expedients of his best predecessors, he misses the one essential touch of spontaneous impulse. . . . The fragments cohere by external cement, not by an internal unity of thought."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Of the 'wild benefit of nature' Pope had small notion. . . . Of that indescribable something, that 'greatness' which causes Dryden to uplift a lofty head from the deep pit of his corruption, neither Pope's character nor his style bears any trace. . . . A cleverer fellow than Pope never commenced author. He was, in his own mundane way, as de-

terminated to be a poet, and the best going, as John Milton himself. He took pains to be splendid—he polished and pruned. His first draft never reached the printer—though he sometimes said it did.”—*Augustine Birrell*.

“There are no pictures of nature or of simple emotion in all his writings. He is the poet of town life and of high life and of literary life, and seems so much afraid of incurring ridicule by the display of feeling or unregulated fancy that it is not difficult to believe that he would have thought such ridicule well directed.”—*Francis Jeffrey*.

“The fact is that, in a very artificial age (and such was the age of Pope), an artificial poet is the highest poet attainable; his very artificiality of matter and style is his authentication as poet. . . . The only condition, then, on which we can have real poets in an artificial age is that they should be in a measure artificial; on that condition we can have them, and in Pope England had one truly super-eminent.”—*W. M. Rossetti*.

“The taste of Pope was evidently artificial to the last degree. He delighted in a grotto decked out with looking-glasses and colored stones as much as Wordsworth in a mountain path, or Scott in a border antiquity. The ‘Rape of the Lock’ is considered his most characteristic production, and abounds with brilliant fancy and striking invention. But to what is it devoted? The celebration of a trivial incident in fashionable life. Its inspiration is not of the grove, but of the boudoir. It is not bright with the radiance of truth, but with the polish of art. It breathes not the fragrance of wild flowers, but the fumes of tea. It displays not the simple features of nature, but the paraphernalia of the toilet.”—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

“Pope’s ‘Messiah’ reads to us like a sickly paraphrase, in which all the majesty of the original is dissipated. ‘Righteousness’ becomes ‘dewy nectar;’ ‘sheep’ are ‘the fleecy care;’ the call to Jerusalem to ‘arise and shine’ is turned



into an invocation to 'exalt her tow'ry head.' The 'fir tree and box tree' of Isaiah are 'the spiry fir and shapely box.'"  
 —*Mark Pattison.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,  
 The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;  
 On shining altars of Japan they raise  
 The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:  
 From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,  
 While China's earth receives the smoking tide."

—*The Rape of the Lock.*

"Swift fly the years, and rise the expected morn!  
 Oh spring to light, auspicious Babe, be born!  
 See, Nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,  
 With all the incense of the breathing spring:  
 See lofty Lebanon his head advance,  
 See nodding forests on the mountains dance:  
 See spicy clouds from lowly Saron rise,  
 And Carmel's flowery top perfumes the skies!  
 Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers;  
 Prepare the way! a God, a God appears:  
 A God, a God! the vocal hills reply,  
 The rocks proclaim the approaching Deity.  
 Lo, earth receives him from the bending skies!"

—*Messiah.*

"Thou, too, great father of the British floods!  
 With joyful pride survey'st our lofty woods;  
 Where towering oaks their growing honours rear,  
 And future navies on thy shores appear,  
 Not Neptune's self from all her streams receives  
 A wealthier tribute than to thine he gives.  
 No seas so rich, so gay no banks appear,  
 No lake so gentle and no spring so clear.  
 Nor Po so swells the fabling poet's lays,  
 While led along the skies his current strays,  
 As thine, which visits Windsor's famed abodes,  
 To grace the mansion of our earthly gods:"

Nor all his stars above a lustre show  
 Like the bright beauties on thy banks below ;  
 Where Jove, subdued by mortal passion still,  
 Might change Olympus for a nobler hill."

— *Windsor Forest.*

**5. Vivid Portraiture—Individuality.**—"He did in some inadequate sense hold up the mirror to nature. . . . It was a mirror in a drawing-room, but it gave back a faithful image of society, powdered and rouged, to be sure, and intent on trifles, yet still as human in its own way as the heroes of Homer in theirs."—*Lowell.*

"There is a kind [of writing] in which he succeeds. . . . His descriptive and oratorical talents find in portraiture matter which suits them. . . . Several of his portraits are medals worthy of finding a place in the cabinets of the curious and of remaining in the archives of the human race; when he chisels one of these heads, the comprehensive images, the unlooked-for connections of words, the sustained and multiplied contrasts, the perpetual and extraordinary conciseness, the incessant and increasing impulse of all the strokes of eloquence brought to bear upon the same spot, stamp upon the memory an impress which we never forget."—*Taine.*

"Like all the greatest poets, Pope is individual and local. He can paint with his full power only what he sees. . . . He can pick out all the flaws, all the stains, combine them effectively, and present them as a picture of the man. To his portraits none can deny a certain likeness."—*Mark Pattison.*

"Each of these descriptions [of Addison and others] is, indeed, a masterpiece in its way; the language is inimitably clear and pointed."—*Leslie Stephen.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Statesman, yet friend to truth ! of soul sincere,  
 In action faithful, and in honour clear !  
 Who broke no promise, served no private end,  
 Who gained no title, and who lost no friend ;  
 Ennobled by himself, by all approved,  
 Praised, wept, and honour'd by the muse he loved.”  
 — *On James Craggs, Esq.*

“Go ! fair example of untainted youth,  
 Of modest wisdom and pacific truth :  
 Composed in sufferings and in joy sedate,  
 Good without noise, without pretension great,  
 Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,  
 Who knew no wish but what the world might hear.  
 Of softest manners, unaffected mind,  
 Lover of peace, and friend of humankind :  
 Go live ! for Heaven's eternal year is thine,  
 Go, and exalt thy mortal to divine.” — *To Robert Digby.*

**6. Meanness — Coarseness — Malignity.** — “The *Dunciad*’ is a personal satire, or lampoon, directed against the small authors of the day, who are bespattered with much mud and little wit, without any pretense of disguise and under their own names . . . —an amalgam of dirt, ribaldry, and petty spite. . . . And against whom is this petty irritation felt? Against feeble journalists, brutal pamphleteers, starving rhymesters, and a crew of hackney authors, bohemians of ink and paper below literature. To sting and wound these unfortunates gave Pope pleasure as he sate, meditating stabs, in his elegant villa, the resort of the rich and the noble ! By attacking these, he lowers himself to their level. The first poet of the age—of the century—chooses to hand himself down to posterity as bandying scurrilities with the meanest scribblers, hired defamers, the banditti of the printing-office, ready at the shortest notice to deliver half a crown’s worth of

slander. . . . His more elaborate portraits are so many virulent and abusive lampoons. In his savage assaults on Lady Mary Wortley Montague and on old Lord Hervey, he passed the bounds of the rules of decorum recognized, not to say in refined but in decent society. His verses on Addison violate only truth and good feeling. But it is not only in his individual portraits that he is carried beyond the bounds of civility, his whole satire is pitched in a key which good taste is compelled to disown. It is trenchant and direct. It is not merely caustic, it is venomous. It betrays a spiteful purpose in the satirist. . . . Pope was conscious of a talent for caustic effects, conscious that he could do better than any one what every one else was doing—sting with epigram.

. . . He was capable of the malice which thirsts for leaving wounds. All those bitter couplets were not impulse or fashion but meditated stabs of personal vengeance. . . .

For all outside his own circle he has nothing but bitterness.

. . . He fell furiously upon the trade of authorship, treated poverty as a vice, and descends even to contrast his own 'poetic dignity and ease' with the raggedness and dinnerlessness of the sons of rhyme. The 'Dunciad' is wholly inspired by this animosity against needy authors. . . .

Pope too often allows the personal grudge to be seen through the surface of public police which he puts on his work. . . .

But the thin disguise of offended virtue is too often a cloak for revenge. His most pungent verses can always be referred back to some personal cause of affront. . . . He knowingly threw away fame to indulge his piques."—*Mark Pattison*.

"In his lifetime 'the wasp of Twickenham' could sting through a sevenfold covering of pride or stupidity. . . .

We have to add all the cases in which Pope attacked his enemies under feigned names, and then disavowed his attacks.

. . . He is the man distinguished beyond all other writers for the bitterness of his resentment against all small critics; who disfigures his best poems by his petty vengeance for old

attacks. . . . The 'Dunciad,' indeed, is, beyond all question, full of coarse abuse. The second book, in particular, illustrates that strange delight in the physically disgusting which Johnson notices as characteristic of Pope and his master, Swift."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"However great his merit in expression, I think it impossible that a true poet could have written such a satire as the 'Dunciad,' which is even nastier than it is witty. It is filthy even in a filthy age, and Swift himself could not have gone beyond some parts of it. One's mind needs to be sprinkled with some disinfecting fluid after reading it."—*Lowell*.

"The 'Dunciad,' in which he endeavored to sink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves . . . . The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope. . . . He expected that everything should give way to his ease or humour; as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery. . . . He was fretful and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. . . . Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness and of which every ear shrinks from mention."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"Like a hornet, who is said to leave his sting in the wound and then languish away, Pope felt greatly exhausted by the efforts connected with the 'Dunciad.' . . . Pope, besides that the basis of his ridicule is continually too narrow, local, and casual, is rank to utter corruption with a disease far deeper than false refinement or conventionalism."—*De Quincey*.

"It is not unfitting that so quarrelsome a man as Pope should have been the occasion of so much quarrelsomeness in others. . . . The age was a scandalous, ill-living age, and Pope, who was a most confirmed gossip and tale-bearer, picked up all that was going. . . . If the historian or

the moralist seeks an illustration of the coarseness and brutality of their style [the small writers of Pope's day], he finds it only too easily, not in the works of the dead dunces, but in the pages of their persecutor. . . . Pope had none of the grave purpose which makes us, at all events, partially sympathize with Ben Jonson in his quarrels with the poetasters of his day. It is a mere toss-up whose name you may find in the 'Dunciad'—a miserable scribbler's or a resplendent scholar's; a tasteless critic's or an immortal wit's. A satirist who places Richard Bentley and Daniel Defoe amongst the dunces must be content to abate his pretensions to be regarded as a social purge. . . . Pope greatly enjoyed the fear he excited. . . . Many men must have been glad when they read in their scanty journals that Mr. Pope lay dead in his villa at Twickenham. They breathed the easier for the news. Personal satire may be a legitimate but it is an ugly weapon. . . . His 'Eloisa' is marred by a most unfeeling coarseness." — *Augustine Birrell*.

"He could breathe only in an atmosphere of intrigue, and the physical excitement of anger was the keenest pleasure his nerves could enjoy. . . . Since the publication of the Caryl correspondence Pope stands revealed, beyond any hope of justification, as an unscrupulous and intriguing trickster." — *Edmund Gosse*.

"He was as crafty and malignant as a nervous abortion, which he was. When he wanted anything he dared not ask for it plainly; with hints and contrivances of speech he induced people to mention it, to bring it forward, after which he would make use of it. . . . He had an ugly liking for artifice, and played a disloyal trick on Lord Bolingbroke, his greatest friend. . . . He had all the appetite and whims of an old child, an old invalid, an old author, an old bachelor. . . . These villainies, this foul linen, the greasy coat six years old, the musty pudding, and the rest, are to be

found in Pope as in Hogarth, with English coarseness and precision. This is their error ; they are realists, even under the classical wig ; they do not disguise what is ugly and mean ; they describe that ugliness and meanness with their exact outlines and distinguishing marks. . . . This is the reason why their satires are so harsh. . . . Seldom has so much talent been expended to produce so much ennui."—*Taine*.

"The Wicked Wasp of Twickenham."—*Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Though Artemisia [Queen Caroline] talks by fits  
Of councils, classics, fathers, wits,  
Reads Malebranche, Boyle, and Locke :  
Yet in some things methinks she fails—  
'Twere well if she would pare her nails  
And wear a cleaner smock.

Haughty and huge as High-Dutch bride,  
Such nastiness and so much pride  
Are oddly joined by fate :  
On her large squab you find her spread,  
Like a fat corpse upon a bed,  
That lies and stinks in state."—*Artemisia*.

"Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings [Lord Hervey],  
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings ;  
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,  
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys :  
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight  
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.  
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,  
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.  
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,  
And as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,  
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,  
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad.  
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,

Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies,  
 His wit all see-saw, between that and this ;  
 Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,  
 And he himself one vile antithesis."

—*Prologue to the Satires.*

"Avert it, Heaven! that thou, my Cibber, e'er,  
 Shouldst wag a serpent-tail in Smithfield fair!  
 Like the vile straw that's blown about the streets,  
 The needy poet sticks to all he meets,  
 Coach'd, carted, trod upon; now loose, now fast,  
 And carried off in some dog's tail at last.  
 Happier thy fortunes! like a rolling stone,  
 Thy giddy dulness still shall lumber on."

—*The Dunciad.*

✓ 7. **Vanity—Insincerity.**—"After all, his great cause for writing was literary vanity: he wished to be admired, and nothing more; his life was that of a coquette studying herself in a glass, painting her face, smirking, receiving compliments from anyone, yet declaring that compliments weary her, that paint makes her dirty, and that she has a horror of affectation. . . . He was never frank, always acting a part; he aped the blasé man, the impartial great artist; a contemner of the great, of kings, of poetry itself. . . . When we read his correspondence we find that there are not more than ten genuine letters. . . . It seems that this kind of talent is made for light verses. . . . To make pretty speeches, to prattle with the ladies, to speak elegantly of their chocolate or their fan, to jeer at fools, to criticise the last tragedy, to be good at insipid compliments or epigrams—this, it seems, is the natural employment of a mind such as this, but slightly impassioned, very vain, a perfect master of style, as careful of his verses as a dandy of his coat."—*Taine.*

"Pope was through his life ambitious of splendid acquaintance. . . . In his character may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues. . . . It



may be discovered that when he thinks himself concealed he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. . . . Pope had been flattered until he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him entreated and implored ; and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed. . . . Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head. . . . Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have obtained by any practices of meanness or servility ; a boast which was never denied to be true. . . . It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. . . . One of his favorite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation ; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed ; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry ? . . . He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation ; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped that he did despise them. . . . Pope was sufficiently a fool to fame, and his fault was that he pretended to neglect it. . . . His scorn of the great is too often repeated to be real ; as no man thinks much of that which he despises ; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them. . . . When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with tempo-

rary qualities, and sallies out in the colors of the present moment."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"Recent investigations have strengthened those suspicions of his honesty which were common even among his contemporaries. . . . Speaking bluntly, indeed, . . . we admit that Pope was, in a small way, one of the most consummate liars that ever lived. . . . Pope's delight in artifice was something unparalleled. . . . Our pleasure in reading him is much counterbalanced by the suspicion that those pointed aphorisms which he turns out in so admirably polished a form may come only from the lips. . . . Thus we are always pursued, in reading Pope, by disagreeable misgivings. We don't know what comes from the heart and what from the lips: when the real man is speaking, and when we are listening only to the old commonplaces skilfully vamped. . . . One can hardly help smiling at his praises of his own hospitality. . . . How far he succeeded in imposing upon himself is, indeed, a very curious question, which can never be fully answered. There is the strangest mixture of honesty and hypocrisy. . . . He would instinctively snatch at a lie even when a moment's reflection would have shown that the plain truth would be more convenient, and therefore he had to accumulate lie upon lie, each intended to patch up some previous blunder."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Pope practised on this, as on other occasions, a little finessing; which is the chief foible of his character. . . . What quality of thinking must that be [speaking of Pope's] which allies itself so naturally with distortions of fact or of philosophic truth? . . . Pope, having no such internal principle of wrath boiling in his breast, . . . was unavoidably a hypocrite of the first magnitude when he affected himself . . . to be in a dreadful passion with offenders in a body. It provokes fits of laughter, in a man who knows Pope's real nature, to watch him in the process of braving the storm that spontaneously will not come, whistling like a mari-

ner for a wind to fill his satiric sails, and pumping up into his face hideous grimaces in order to appear convulsed with histrionic rage. Pope should have been counseled never to write satire except on those evenings when he was suffering horribly from indigestion. By this means the indignation would have been ready-made. The rancor against all mankind would have been sincere, and there would have needed to be no extra expense in getting up steam. As it is, the short puffs of anger, the uneasy snorts of fury, in Pope's satires give one painfully the idea of a locomotive engine with unsound lungs. . . . Sudden collapses of the manufactured wrath, sudden oblivion of the criminal, announce that Pope's passion is always counterfeit. . . . Truth, even of the most appreciable order, truth of history, goes to wreck continually under the perversities Pope's satire applied to celebrated men; and as to the higher truth of philosophy, it was still less likely to survive amongst the struggles for striking effects and startling contrasts. . . . The key to his failure throughout this whole satire section [satires on woman] . . . is simply that not one word is spoken in sincerity of heart or with any vestige of self-belief. . . . The malignity [against women] was not real—as indeed nothing was real—but a condiment for hiding insipidity. . . . Pope, in too many instances, for the sake of some momentary and farcical effect, deliberately assumes the license of a liar. He adopts the language of moral indignation where we know that it could not possibly have existed, seeing that the story to which this pretended indignation is attached was, to Pope's knowledge, a pure fabrication. . . . That Pope killed himself by potted lampreys . . . I greatly doubt; but if anything inclines me to believe it, chiefly it is the fury of his invectives against epicures and gluttons. What most of all he attacked as a moralist was the particular vice which most of all besieged him. . . . He writes with a showy air of disparaging riches, of doing homage to private worth, of honoring patriotism, and so on

through all the commonplaces of creditable morality. But, in the midst of this surface display, and in defiance of his ostentatious pretensions, Pope is not in any deep or sincere sense a moral thinker; and in his own heart there was a misgiving, not to be silenced, that he was not. . . . Here, however [in his satires and moral epistles], most eminently it is that the falseness and hypocrisy which besieged his literary career have made themselves manifest. . . . Pope, in the midst of actual fidelity to his church, was at heart a traitor—in the very oath of his allegiance to his spiritual mistress he had a lie upon his lips, scoffed at her whilst kneeling in homage to her pretensions, and secretly foreswore her doctrines whilst suffering insults in her service. . . . But upon far more subjects than this Pope was habitually false in the quality of his thoughts, always insincere, never by any accident in earnest, and consequently many times caught in ruinous self-contradiction. . . . But if the reader is shocked with Pope's false reading of phenomena where not the circumstances so much as the construction may be challenged, what must he think of those cases in which downright facts and incidents the most notorious have been outrageously falsified only in obedience to a vulgar craving for effect in the dramatic situations, or by way of pointing a moral for the stimulation of torpid sensibilities? . . . [In describing the death of the Duke of Buckingham.] But Pope was at his wit's end for a striking falsehood. He needed for a momentary effect some tale of a great lord, once fabulously rich, who had not left himself the price of a halter or of a pauper's bed. And thus, for the sake of extorting a stare of wonderment from a mob of gaping readers he did not scruple to give birth and currency to the grossest of legendary fables. . . . Such shame [from personal falsehoods] would settle upon every page of Pope's satires and moral epistles, oftentimes upon every couplet, if any censor, armed with an adequate knowledge of the facts, were to prosecute the inquest. And the general impres-

sion from such an inquest would be that Pope never delineated a character nor uttered a sentiment nor breathed an aspiration which he would not willingly have recast, have retracted, have abjured or trampled under foot with the curses assigned to heresy, if by such an act he could have added a hue of brilliancy to his coloring or a new depth to his shadows. There is nothing he would not have sacrificed, not the most solemn of his opinions nor the most pathetic memorial from his personal experiences, in return for a sufficient consideration—which consideration meant always with him poetic effect.

. . . Simply and constitutionally, he was incapable of a sincere thought or a sincere emotion. . . . And he was evermore false, not as loving or preferring falsehood, but as one who could not in his heart perceive much real difference between what people affected to call falsehood and what they affected to call truth. . . . To look at a pale, dejected fellow-creature creeping along the highway and to have reason for thinking that he has not tasted food since yesterday . . . in Pope, left to his spontaneous nature, such a sight and such a thought would have moved only fits of laughter. . . . Still, he was aware that some caution was requisite in giving public expression to such feelings. Accordingly, when he came forward in gala dress as a philosopher, he assumed the serene air of one upon whom all such idle distinctions as rich and poor were literally thrown away. . . . To a just appreciation of Pope's falseness, levity, and self-contradiction it is almost essential that a reader should have studied him with the purpose of becoming his editor."—*De Quincey*.

"Pope seems to refine them [his satirical portraits] in his own mind and to make them out just what he pleases, till they are not real characters but the mere drivelling effusions of his spleen and malice. Pope describes the thing and then goes on describing his own description till he loses himself in verbal repetitions."—*William Hazlitt*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Well, if it be my time to quit the stage,  
 Adieu to all the follies of the age !  
 I die in charity with fool and knave,  
 Secure of peace at least beyond the grave.  
 I've had my purgatory here betimes,  
 And paid for all my satires, all my rhymes.  
 . . . . .  
 With foolish pride my heart was never fired,  
 Nor the vain itch to admire or be admired ;  
 I hoped for no commission from his grace ;  
 I bought no benefice, I begged no place.”—*Satires*.

“ Friend to my life ! (which did not you prolong,  
 The world had wanted many an idle song).  
 What drop or nostrum can this plague remove ?  
 Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love ?  
 A dire dilemma ! either way I'm sped,  
 If foes, they write—if friends, they read me dead.  
 Seized and tied down to judge, how wretched I !  
 Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.”  
 —*Prologue to the Satires*.

“ From me, what Virgil, Pliny may deny,  
 Manilius or Solimus shall supply :  
 For Attic phrase in Plato let them seek,  
 I poach in Suidas for unlicensed Greek.  
 In ancient sense if any needs will deal,  
 Be sure I give them fragments, not a meal ;  
 What Gellius or Stobaeus hash'd before,  
 Or chewed my blind old Scholiasts o'er and o'er  
 The critic eye, that microscope of wit,  
 Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit.”  
 —*The Dunciad*.

“ Heroes and kings ! your distance keep :  
 In peace let one poor poet sleep,  
 Who never flattered folks like you :  
 Let Horace blush, and Virgil too.”  
 —*For One Who Would Not be Buried  
 in Westminster Abbey*.

**8. Elegance—Brilliance—Gracefulness.**—"Pope is the incarnation of the literary spirit. . . He is the most complete representative in our language of the intellectual instincts which find their natural expression in pure literature. . . . He was an artist of unparalleled excellence in his own department."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Within his narrow circle how much, and that how exquisite, was contained! What discrimination, what wit, what delicacy, what fancy, what elegance of thought! . . . The 'Rape of the Lock' is the most exquisite specimen of filigree work ever invented."—*William Hazlitt*.

"What grace, what taste, what promptitude in feeling, how much justness and what perfection did he show in expressing himself! . . . We see . . . what care and what elegance he introduced into his varied epistolary intercourse."—*St. Beuve*.

"The 'Rape of the Lock' stands forth in the classes of literature as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. With elegance of description and justness of precept, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"Pope is a representative of fine literature in general. . . . In the 'Rape of the Lock' there is a game of cards played and played with a brilliancy of effect and felicity of selection, applied to the circumstances, which make it a sort of gem within a gem. . . . The true pretensions of Pope are sustained as the most brilliant writer of his own class in European literature."—*De Quincey*.

"In Pope we have the constant effort to condense, to concentrate meaning. The thought has been turned over and over, till it is brought out finally with a point and finish which themselves elicit admiration. Sometimes, but rarely, does the severity of the writer's taste allow him to overpoint what he wishes to say and to let the epigram run away with him."—*Mark Pattison*.

"When the vast number of his couplets are considered, their fastidious correctness is truly astonishing."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is Man.  
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise and rudely great ;  
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,  
He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest ;  
In doubt to deem himself a god or beast ;  
In doubt his mind or body to prefer ;  
Born but to die and reasoning but to err."

—*Essay on Man.*

"'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill  
Appear in writing or in judging ill ;  
But, of the two, less dangerous is the offence  
To tire our patience than mislead our sense.  
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,  
Ten censure wrong, for one who writes amiss ;  
A fool might once himself alone expose,  
Now one in verse makes many more in prose."

—*Essay on Criticism.*

"'Tis from high life high characters are drawn ;  
A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn ;  
A judge is just, a chancellor juster still ;  
A gownman learned ; a bishop, what you will ;  
Wise, if a minister ; but, if a king,  
More wise, more learn'd, more just, more ev'rything."

—*Moral Essays.*

✓ 9. **Delicate Skill in Criticism.**—"If he had an excessive hatred of stupid authors, he admired the good and the great ones all the more. . . . No example proves to us better than his own how much the faculty of a sensitive,



delicate critic is an active faculty. He who has nothing to express neither feels nor perceives in such a manner. . . . When one is a critic to this extent, it is because one is a poet. . . . Pope has defined and chalked out the fine part of the true critic in many passages full of nobleness and fire. . . . No one, perhaps, has been conscious of literary stupidity and suffered from it in as high a degree as Pope."—*St. Beuve*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Poets, like painters, thus, unskill'd to trace,  
The naked nature and the living grace,  
With gold and jewels cover every part,  
And hide with ornaments their want of art.  
True wit is nature to advantage dress'd ;  
What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed ;  
Something whose truth, convinced at sight we find,  
That gives us back the image of our mind.  
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,  
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.  
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,  
As bodies perish through excess of blood."

—*Essay on Criticism*.

"In all debates where critics bear a part,  
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's art,  
Of Shakespeare's nature, and of Cowley's wit ;  
How Beaumont's judgment checked what Fletcher writ ;  
How Shadwell hasty, Wycherley was slow ;  
But, for the passions, Southern sure and Rowe.  
These, only these, support the crowded stage,  
From eldest Heywood down to Cibber's age."

—*Imitations of Horace*.

"But most by numbers judge a poet's song,  
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong ;  
In the bright Muse, though thousand charms conspire,  
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire ;

Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,  
 Not mend their minds ; as some to church repair,  
 Not for the doctrine but the music there.  
 These equal syllables alone require,  
 Though oft the ear the open vowels tire ;  
 While expletives their feeble aid do join ;  
 And ten low words oft creep in one dull line ;  
 While they ring round the same unvaried chimes  
 With sure returns of still expected rhymes :  
 Where'er you find ' the cooling western breeze,'  
 In the next line, it ' whispers through the trees :'  
 If crystal streams ' with pleasing murmurs creep,'  
 The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with ' sleep ;'  
 Then, at the last and only couplet fraught  
 With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,  
 A needless Alexandrine ends the song."

—*Essay on Criticism.*

#### 10. Religious Faith—Conventional Morality.—

"Pope, wheresoever his heart speaks loudly, shows how deep had been his early impressions from Christianity. . . . It is remarkable, also, that Pope betrays, in all places where he has occasion to argue about Christianity, how much grander and more faithful to that great theme were the subconscious perceptions of his heart than the explicit commentaries of his understanding. He, like so many others, was unable to read or interpret the testimonies of his own heart—an unfathomed deep, over which diviner agencies brood than are legible to the intellect. The cipher written on his heaven-visited heart was deeper than his understanding could interpret."—*De Quincey.*

' In Pope's writings . . . he [the reader] will find the very excellences after which our poets strive in vain . . . and a morality infinitely more merciful, as well as more righteous, than the one now in vogue among the poetasters, by honest faith in God. . . . He went through doubt, contradiction, confusion, to which yours are simple and light,

and conquered. . . . In all times and places, as far as we can judge, the man was heart-whole, more and not less righteous than his fellows. With his whole soul he hates what is evil, as far as he can recognize it. With his whole soul he loves what is good, as far as he can recognize that. With his whole soul believes that there is a righteous and good God, whose order no human folly or crime can destroy; and he will say so; and does say it, clearly, simply, valiantly, reverently, in his 'Essay on Man.' . . . There were in that diseased, sensitive cripple no vain repinings, no moon-struck howls, no impious cries against God: 'Why hast thou made me thus?' To him, God is a righteous God, a God of order."—*Charles Kingsley*.

"Pope was . . . in his way, as fair an embodiment as we could expect of that 'plain living and high thinking' of which Wordsworth regretted the disappearance. . . . A tolerant, reverent, and kindly heart."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"His letters and prose writings give a very favorable idea of his moral character in all respects. . . . If I had to choose, there are one or two persons—and but one or two—that I should like to have been better than Pope!"—*William Hazlitt*.

"His filial piety and steadiness in his friendships are publicly attested, and his many private charities are equally well ascertained."—*Mark Pattison*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;  
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,  
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;

Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,  
 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;  
 As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns  
 As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :  
 To Him no high, no low, no great, no small ;  
 He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all."

—*Essay on Man.*

" To each unthinking being, Heaven, a friend,  
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end :  
 To man imparts it, but with such a view  
 As, while he dreads it, makes him hope it too :  
 The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear,  
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.  
 Great standing miracle ! that Heaven assign'd  
 Its only thinking thing this turn of mind."

—*Essay on Man.*

" Father of all ! in every age,  
 In every clime adored,  
 By saint, by savage, and by sage,  
 Jehovah, Jove, or Lord !

Save me alike from foolish pride  
 Or impious discontent  
 At aught thy wisdom has denied  
 Or aught thy goodness lent.  
 Teach me to feel another's woe,  
 To hide the fault I see ;  
 That mercy I to others show,  
 That mercy show to me."

—*The Universal Prayer.*

**II. Erudition—Wide Learning.**—" He read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishable voracity and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. . . . The 'Essay on Criticism' displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with

mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. . . . His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, show an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge and attentive to retain it. . . . These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information."—*Samuel Johnson*.

"The fact is, Pope's curiosity was too inordinate—his desire to know everything all at once too strong—to admit of the delay of learning a foreign language; and he was consequently a reader of translations. . . . He was, as a boy, a simply ferocious reader, and was acquainted with the contents of the great poets of both antiquity and the modern world. His studies, at once intense, prolonged, and exciting, injured his feeble health, and made him the life-long sufferer he was."—*Augustine Birrell*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"When first young Maro, in his boundless mind,  
A work to outlast immortal Rome design'd,  
Perhaps he seemed above the critic's law,  
And but from nature's fountain scorn'd to draw:  
But when to examine every part he came,  
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.  
Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design:  
And rules as strict his labour'd work confine  
As if the Stagyrte o'erlooked each line.  
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;  
To copy nature is to copy them."

—*Essay on Criticism*.

" At length Erasmus, that great injured name,  
 (The glory of the priesthood and the shame !)  
 Stemmed the wild torrent of a barbarous age,  
 And drove those holy vandals off the stage.  
 But see ! each Muse, in LEO'S golden days,  
 Starts from her trance, and trims her withered bays.  
 Rome's ancient genius, o'er its ruins spread,  
 Shakes off the dust, and rears his reverend head.  
 Then sculpture and her sister-arts revive ;  
 Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live ;  
 With sweeter notes each rising temple rung ;  
 A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung.  
 Immortal Vida ! on whose honoured brow  
 The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow :  
 Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,  
 As next in place to Mantua, next in fame ! "

—*Essay on Criticism.*

**12. Fragmentariness — Lack of Logical Sequence.**—" Of all the poets that have practised reasoning in verse, Pope is the most inconsequential in the deduction of his thoughts and the most severely distressed in the effort to effect or to explain the dependency of their parts. There are not ten consecutive lines in Pope unaffected by this infirmity. All his thinking proceeded by insulated and discontinuous jets ; and the only resource for him, or chance of even seeming correctness, lay in the liberty of stringing his aphoristic thoughts like pearls, having no relation to each other but that of contiguity. . . . The ' Essay on Man ' sins chiefly by want of a central principle and by want, therefore, of all coherency amongst the separate thoughts. The ' Essay on Criticism ' is a collection of independent maxims, tied together into a fasciculus by the printer, but having no natural order or logical dependency : generally so vague as to mean nothing. . . . The ' Atossa ' is a mere chaos of incompatibilities, thrown together as into some witch's cauldron. The witch, however, had sometimes an unaffected malignity,

a sincerity of venom in her wrath, which acted chemically as a solvent for combining the heterogeneous ingredients in her kettle; whereas the want of truth and earnestness in Pope leaves the incongruities in his kettle of description to their natural incoherent operation on the reader. . . . [The 'Essay on Man' is] an accumulation of diamond dust without principles of coherency. . . . It is, indeed, the realization of anarchy; and one amusing test of this may be found in the fact that different commentators have deduced from it the very opposite theories. . . . The 'Essay on Man' in one point resembles some doubtful inscriptions in ancient forms of Oriental languages, which, being made up elliptically of mere consonants, can be read into very different senses according to the different sets of vowels which the particular reader may choose to interpolate."—*De Quincey*.

"The first thing which strikes us on a rapid survey of Pope's writings is their fragmentary nature. . . . The 'Essay on Man' and all the satires, imitations, and other essays are only disjointed members or scraps of one vast philosophical work, which never saw the light. This fragmentary character matters less to us because it is not his substance or his general effect which we delight in in Pope but his details. His best poems are bits of mosaic, which we admire the most when we pull them to pieces, tessera by tessera, and analyze their exquisite workmanship."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"He unluckily fills up the gaps in his logical edifice with the untempered mortar of obsolete metaphysics, long since become utterly uninteresting to men."—*Leslie Stephen*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,  
For there's a happiness as well as care.  
Music resembles poetry: in each  
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,  
And which a master-hand alone can reach.

If, where the rules not far enough extend,  
 (Since rules were made but to promote their end,)  
 Some lucky license answer to the full  
 The intent proposed, that license is a rule.  
 Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,  
 May boldly deviate from the common track."

—*Essay on Criticism.*

"In lazy apathy let stoics boast  
 Their virtue fix'd ; 'tis fixed as in a frost ;  
 Contracted all, retiring to the breast ;  
 But strength of mind is exercise, not rest :  
 The rising tempest puts in act the soul ;  
 Parts it may ravage, but preserves the whole.  
 On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,  
 Reason the card, but passion is the gale ;  
 Nor God alone in the still calm we find,  
 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind."

—*Essay on Man.*

**13. Contempt for Womanhood.**—"It is painful to follow a man of genius through a succession of inanities descending into absolute nonsense and of vulgar fictions sometimes terminating in brutalities. These are harsh words, but not harsh enough by half as applied to Pope's gallery of female portraits. . . . The describer knows, as well as any of us the spectators know, that he is romancing, . . . and we cannot submit to be detained by a picture which, according to the shifting humor of the poet, angry or laughing, is a lie where it is not a jest, is an affront to the truth of nature where it is not confessedly an extravagance of drollery. In a playful fiction we can submit with pleasure to the most enormous exaggerations ; but then they must be offered as such. These of Pope's are not so offered but as serious portraits ; and in that character they affect us as odious and malignant libels. . . . There is no truth in Pope's satiric sketches of women—not even colorable truth ; but if



there were, how frivolous, how hollow, to erect into solemn, monumental protestations against the whole female sex what, if examined, turn out to be pure casual eccentricities or else personal idiosyncrasies or else foibles shockingly caricatured, but above all to be such foibles as could not have connected themselves with sincere feelings of indignation in any rational mind. . . . Pope's pretended portraiture of women . . . the more they ought to have been true, as professing to be studies from life, the more atrociously they are false, and false in the transcendent sense of being impossible. Heaps of contradiction or of revolting extravagance do not verify themselves to our loathing incredulity because the artist chooses to come forward with his arms akimbo, saying angrily, 'But I tell you, sir, these are not fancy pieces! These ladies whom I have here lampooned are familiarly known to me; they are my particular friends.'—*De Quincey*.

"In his epistle on the character of women, no one who has ever known a noble woman, nay, I should almost say no one who has ever had a mother or a sister, will find much to please him. The climax of his praise rather degrades than elevates. . . . His nature delighted more in detecting the blemish than in enjoying the charm."—*Lowell*.

"Contempt veiled under the show of deference, a mockery of chivalry, its form without its spirit—this is the attitude assumed towards women by the poet in this piece ['Rape of the Lock']. This feeling towards woman is not the poet's idiosyncrasy; here he is but the representative of his age."—*Mark Pattison*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"There Affectation, with a sickly mien,  
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen;  
Practised to lisp and hang the head aside,  
Faints into airs and languishes with pride;  
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,

Wrapt in a gown, for sickness and for show.  
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,  
When each new night-dress gives a new disease."

—*The Rape of the Lock.*

"She [Queen Caroline] wears no colours (sign of grace)  
On any part except her face ;  
All white and black beside :  
Dauntless her look, her gesture proud,  
Her voice theatrically loud,  
And masculine her stride.

So have I seen in black and white  
A prating thing, a magpie hight,  
Majestically stalk :  
A stately worthless animal,  
That plies the tongue and wags the tail,  
All flutter, pride, and talk."—*Artemisia.*

"Ladies, like variegated tulips, show ;  
'Tis to their changes half their charms we owe ;  
Fine by defect and delicately weak,  
Their happy spots the nice admirer take.  
'Twas thus Calypso once each heart alarm'd,  
Awed without virtue, without beauty charm'd ;  
Her tongue bewitch'd as oddly as her eyes ;  
Less wit than mimic, more a wit than wise.  
Strange graces still and stranger flights she had,  
Was just not ugly, and was just not mad ;  
Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,  
As when she touched the brink of all we hate."

—*Epistle to a Lady.*

## BURNS, 1759-1796

**Biographical Outline.**—Robert Burns, born at Alloway, Scotland, January 25, 1759; his father, a nursery gardener, spelled his name Burness or Burnes; Burns attends a school at Alloway Mill in his sixth year, and soon afterward enters a private school set up by his father and four neighbors; in 1766 his father takes a poor farm at Mount Oliphant, two miles away, and the school attendance of Burns and his brother Gilbert becomes irregular; they are taught thereafter chiefly by their father; in 1772 Robert attends a school at Dalrymple; he improves his writing, and is in a school at Ayr for three weeks during the summer of 1773, where he learns a bit of French; at thirteen he is threshing corn, and at fifteen is his father's chief laborer; he learns many popular legends from an old woman neighbor, and borrows and reads several biographical and theological books; he reads also the *Spectator*, Pope's translation of the "Iliad," and some of the works of Smollett, Ramsay, and Fergusson; he picks up French readily, reads "*Télémaque*," and tries Latin, though with little success; his literary talents attract the attention of the neighbors, and his father prophesies that Robert will do something extraordinary; his first poem, "Handsome Nell," is composed in the autumn of 1775, and was addressed to a fellow-laborer in the fields.

In 1777 his father removes to a larger farm at Lochlea, Tarbolton, while Robert goes to live with an uncle at Ballochneil, where he studies surveying at a school in the neighboring village of Kirkeswold; here he meets certain jovial smugglers, learns to "fill his glass," falls in love with "a charming fillette," scribbles verses and defeats his school-master in a

debate when rashly challenged by the latter ; on his return to the farm at Lochlea he reads Thompson, Shenstone, Sterne, and Ossian ; while at Lochlea he writes " Winter," " The Death of Poor Maillie," " John Barleycorn," and other songs ; in 1780 he joins a " Bachelor's Club " at Tarbolton, where he debates on love, friendship, etc. ; he falls in love with Ellison Begbie, daughter of a neighboring farmer, who is the " Mary Morison " of his poems, but he is rejected by her on his departure for Irvine, whither he goes in the summer of 1781 to enter a flax-dressing business with a relative of his mother's.

At Irvine he forms a friendship with Richard Brown, a sailor, who encourages him to " endeavor at the character of a poet," but also leads him into vice ; while he is carousing, on January 1, 1782, the flax-dressing shop takes fire and is destroyed ; Burns thereupon returns to Lochlea, and lives for awhile frugally and temperately ; in April, 1783, he begins a commonplace book, which he continues at intervals through many years ; in 1781 he had joined a Masonic lodge at Tarbolton and he remained an enthusiastic Mason during life ; Burns's father, a devout Presbyterian and the author of a little " Manual of Religious Belief," died February 13, 1784 ; with his brother Gilbert, Burns saves enough by litigation over his father's lease to start a farm of one hundred and eighteen acres at Mossgiel, near Mauchline, where they settle in 1784 as subtenants of the writer Gavin Hamilton, who becomes a warm friend of Burns ; Burns becomes known to the educated men of Mauchline and Kilmarnock, writes more verses, is severely ill, and writes several lines expressive of penitence, but soon becomes the father of an illegitimate child ; his brother Gilbert suggests that the " Epistle to Davie," written in January, 1785, will " bear printing ; " he writes the two epistles to John Lapraik in April, 1785, and " Death and Dr. Hornbrook " about the same time ; Dr. Hornbrook is John Wilson, then a village apothecary.

Burns throws himself enthusiastically into the theological struggle then raging between the "Auld Licht" and the "New Licht" parties, during which his landlord and friend Hamilton was twice tried for neglecting Sunday; in connection with this controversy Burns writes his "Twa Herds" about April, 1785; it is circulated in manuscript, as is "Holy Willie's Prayer," written about the same time; during 1785 he writes also his "Holy Fair" and his "Cotter's Saturday Night," which describes his father's daily devotions; Burns succeeded his father as head of the family, and is said to have prayed most impressively; while at Mossgiel, 1785-86 he writes also the "Address to the Deil," "The Jolly Beggars," "Twa Dogs," "A Vision," "A Dream," "Halloween," "To a Mouse," "To a Mountain Daisy," and various songs; meantime he has fallen in love with Jean Armour, daughter of an "Auld Licht" master mason of Mauchline, and in the spring of 1786, when she is about to become the mother of a child by Burns, he gives her, according to the morals and customs of his class, a written acknowledgment that she is his wife; her father declares that the marriage must be dissolved, and she surrenders the document, thinking, as did her friends and advisers, that this was equivalent to a divorce; Burns, disgusted, resolves to emigrate and secure a position as overseer of an estate in Jamaica on a salary of £30 a year; at Hamilton's advice he decides to publish his poems, to obtain the necessary passage-money, and they are printed in Kilmarnock in July, 1786; Burns's friends subscribed for three hundred and fifty copies; five hundred and ninety-nine were sold by August 22d, bringing him about £20 and a considerable reputation.

Still proposing emigration, he makes over the copyright of his poems to his brother in favor of his illegitimate daughter; for a time he is compelled to dodge a warrant issued by his wife's father, but he is at Mossgiel September 3, 1786, when his wife gives birth to twins, who live but a short time;

meantime he has become "betrothed," by an exchange of Bibles, to Mary Campbell, daughter of a sailor from Dunoon, whom he had met while she was a nursemaid in the family of Hamilton; this passion is commemorated in Burns's "Highland Lassie," his "Will Ye Go to the Indes, My Mary?" his "To Mary in Heaven" (October, 1789), and his "Highland Mary" (November, 1792), and it was the most enduring of his life; Mary Campbell died in October, 1786; Burns receives a letter from Blacklock, the blind poet, praising his poems and urging a second edition; he is also encouraged by Dugald Stewart, with whom he is invited to dine October 23, 1786, at the instigation of Mr. Mackenzie, a surgeon at Mauchline; his printer at Kilmarnock refuses to take a second edition without an advance of £27, which Burns replies "is out of my power;" a friend, Mr. Ballantyne of Ayr, offers to loan the money, but advises Burns to seek a publisher in Edinburgh; just before going to Edinburgh he meets Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, who becomes his friend and correspondent through life.

He leaves Mossgiel November 27, 1786, riding a borrowed pony, and reaches Edinburgh the next day; while in Edinburgh he visits the grave of Fergusson, to whom he erected a monument in the following year, and meets Henry Erskine; Lord Glencairn, a cousin of Burns's friend Dr. Dalrymple, induces his aristocratic friends to subscribe for a second edition of Burns's poems, and Henry Mackenzie, the "Man of Feeling," reviews them enthusiastically in the *Lounger*, calling Burns a "heaven-taught ploughman;" the poems are also favorably noticed in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, and Burns is welcomed by all the literary celebrities in Edinburgh, including the Duchess of Gordon, Robertson, Blair, and Adam Ferguson; he also makes acquaintance with "less exalted circles," and joins a convivial club called the "Crochallan Fencibles," for which he writes verses not creditable to his genius; in the better social circles he shines as a conversation-

alist, and is noted for his "matchless eyes like coals of living fire;" the second edition of his poems appears April 31, 1787, and 2,800 are subscribed for; eventually, the edition brings Burns about £500; in the spring of 1787 he enters into an agreement to contribute Scotch songs to the collection then in preparation, and in May a volume appears with two songs by Burns; for these and his many other songs he neither asked nor received payment, writing them from purely patriotic motives; during the summer of 1787 he makes a tour, inspecting several farms, and collects several songs; with Robert Ainsley, a young writer, he visits Coldstream (where he crosses the bridge, to be in England), Kelso, Jedburgh, Alnwick, Workmath, Newcastle, Carlisle, and Dumfries, and returns to Mauchline June 9th; here, though disgusted at the servility of her father in view of Burns's new fame, he renews his old relations with Jean Armour.

After a month at Mauchline and a tour in the West Highlands and Paisley, he visits Edinburgh, August 7th, and there chums with one Nichol, a self-taught teacher at the High School; with Nichol he starts, August 25th, on a tour to the East Highlands, and visits Falkirk, Stirling, Crieff, Dankeld, Blair, Dolwhinnie, through Shathsprey, Aviemore, Dalsie, Kilmarnock, Inverness, Nairn, Farres, and Tocholers; while at Blair he is kindly received by the Duke of Athole; he returns by Aberdeen, Montrose, and Perth, and reaches Edinburgh September 16, 1786; later in the same year he makes another tour in the East Highlands, and visits Ramsay at Menteith; after his return to Edinburgh, in the fall of 1786, he lodges at No. 2 St. James Square; he remains in Edinburgh during the winter of 1786-87, vainly trying to get a settlement with his publisher and continually talking of buying a farm; while there he meets a deserted widow, Mrs. M'Lehose, with whom he carries on afterward a long correspondence under the names, respectively, of Clarinder and Sylvander, and with whom he contemplates marriage; he leaves Edinburgh Feb-

ruary 16, 1787, and visits Glasgow on his way to Mauchline; here he reconciles Jean Armour to her mother, who had disowned her because of her continued relations with Burns; on receiving £500 from his publisher, he loans £90 to his brother, who is still struggling with the farm at Mossgiel.

In the spring of 1787 Burns receives a "qualification" for a position as an excise officer; he has continued his letters to Mrs. M'Lehose, but about this time Jean Armour gives birth to a second pair of twins, whose parentage Burns acknowledges; in August, 1787, he is legally married to Jean, they are duly "admonished" in church, and Burns gives a guinea to the poor; in apologizing to Mrs. M'Lehose, two years later, he encloses in a letter to her his poem "Ae Fonde Kiss, and Then We Sever;" meantime he had bought a long lease of a farm of one hundred acres, called Ellisland, six miles from Dumfries; here he comes June 13, 1789, and begins to build a house, his wife meanwhile staying at Mauchline, forty-six miles away; to her he refers in "O a' the Airts the Wind Can Blow" and "O Were I on Parnassus Hill;" with his wife he settles in the new house in December, 1789; about this time he writes "I Hae a Wife o' My Ain," "Auld Lang Syne," and "My Bonnie Mary;" on August 18, 1789, another child was born to him; soon afterward, owing to poor returns from his farm, he resolves to make it a dairy farm and to leave the superintendence of it to his wife, while he can be earning something as an excise officer; he accordingly obtains an appointment as exciseman for his district, an office bringing him a net income of about £40; his duties compelled him to ride two hundred miles a week through ten parishes; soon after his appointment he writes "To Mary in Heaven;" convivial meetings during the autumn of 1789 are celebrated in "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut" and the "Whistle;" while "Hear, Land o' Cakes and Brither Scots" is addressed about the same time to Francis Grose, the artist and antiquarian; Burns asks Grose to



make a drawing of Alloway Kirk, the burial-place of his family, and Grose consents on condition that Burns write for him a witch story; as his part of the bargain Burns writes "Tam o' Shanter," composing it in one day as he walked by the Nith; "Tam" first appeared in Grose's "Antiquities of Scotland" in April, 1791.

Soon after settling at Ellisland, Burns aids in establishing a local library, and records are now extant showing that he purchased for himself, about this time, many standard volumes; he always loved animals and detested field sports; his farming is a failure, and in the summer of 1791 he decides to throw up his lease; the death of Burns's patron, Lord Glencairn, in 1791, gives rise to his "Lament," but lessens the poet's chances of promotion to the excise service; he receives, however, an appointment as exciseman at Dumfries at a salary of £70, and removes thither in December, 1791, residing first in what is now Bank Street and later in what is now Burns Street; in April, 1791, Burns had been presented by his wife with a third son and by one Anne Park with an illegitimate daughter, whom Mrs. Burns promptly adopted.

Burns again visited Edinburgh, briefly, in December, 1791; at Dumfries he associates with the higher families, especially with that of Walter Riddel, a convivialist, who had a fine library and a wife of some poetic ability; by reason of a Jacobite epigram, written long before on a window in Stirling Castle, and by some passages of his poems, Burns soon becomes suspected as a Jacobite in the intense political feeling due to the French Revolution, now current; while watching an armed smuggling vessel in the Norway Firth, February 27, 1792, Burns composes "The Deil's Awa with the Exciseman;" he afterward leads a band of soldiers to the assault, and is the first to board the ship; the ship is condemned, and Burns buys her guns for £3 and sends them as a present to the French legislative body, and escapes dismissal from his office only by the intervention of his friend Graham;

he joins a secret club, and writes but suppresses a political squib, "The Truce of Liberty;" he joins the volunteers formed in 1795, and gives offence by toasting Washington as a greater man than Pitt; these acts lessen the possibility of promotion to a supervisorship or a collectorship, which he greatly desired; although he leads an immoral life, he takes a great interest in the education of his children; he becomes an honorary burgess of Dumfries and a member of the town library; his "devil" is hard drinking at the country-houses of gentlemen; in the autumn of 1792 Burns accepts an invitation to contribute Scotch songs to a collection then forming, the melodies being first supplied; among the songs so contributed is his "Scots Wha Hae Wi' Wallace Bled," composed in July, 1793; during 1794-95 he writes several other songs addressed to "Chloris, the Lassie Wi' the Lint-white Locks," a Mrs. Whipple, for whom Burns's passion was purely political; his song "Oh, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast," was addressed to a nurse during Burns's last illness.

In 1788, and again in 1794, he refuses to become a regular contributor to London journals, although offered a salary each time as large as his annual excise fees; he also steadfastly refuses to receive money for his songs, saying that they are "either above or below the price;" at Burns's death, however, the publisher of the songs voluntarily gave up his rights in them in favor of the poet's family and also turned over to the heirs his correspondence with Burns; over one hundred and eighty songs were contributed by Burns to the "Musical Museum," though only forty-seven are said to be entirely his own work; Burns's total income at Dumfries amounted to about £90, which enabled him to keep a servant and to live in comfort; the death of his daughter in the autumn of 1795 greatly distresses him, and he is ill from October to January; while recovering, he indulges in a carouse, sleeps out of doors, is taken with rheumatic fever, and his health steadily declines; he had been afflicted for some time with a

"flying gout," which he attributed to the follies of his youth ; in his last days he is forced to ask loans of small amounts, though his salary as exciseman is continued through the performance of his duties by a friend ; he dies at Dumfries, July 21, 1796, and a posthumous son is born during the funeral-service ; his family received £700 from a subscription started by friends and £1,400 from an edition of Burns's poems published in 1800 ; a mausoleum for Burns was erected at Dumfries, and his remains were transported thither in September, 1815.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

✓ **1. Sincerity — Manliness — Naturalness.**— “The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose; but at the same time it is plain and easily recognized. . . . The passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding and has been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay but from sight and experience; it is the scenes he has lived and labored amidst that he describes. . . . He speaks forth what is in him because his heart is too full to be silent. . . . It was a curious phenomenon, in the withered, unbelieving, second-hand eighteenth century, that of a hero starting up among the artificial pasteboard figures and productions in the guise of Robert Burns. . . . A noble rough genuineness; homely, rustic, honest; true simplicity of strength; with its lightning fire, with its dewey pity. . . . We recollect no poet of Burns’s susceptibility who comes before us at the first and abides with us to the last with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man and an honest writer. . . . A certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue as of green fields and mountain breezes dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. . . . In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. . . . The chief excellence of Burns is his sincerity and indisputable air of truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities.”—*Carlyle*.

“Consider the perfect naturalness, the entire spontaneity, of his singing. It gushes from him as easily, as clearly, as

serenely as the skylark's song does. In this he surpasses all other song-composers. In truth, when he is at his best, when his soul is really filled with his subject, it is not composing at all; the word is not applicable to him. He sings because he cannot help singing—because his heart is full and could not otherwise relieve itself. . . . The characteristics of the best songs of Burns are absolute truthfulness, truthfulness to the great facts of life, truthfulness also to the singer's own feelings—what we mean by sincerity, second, perfect naturalness: the feeling embodies itself in a form and language as natural to the poet as its song is to the bird. This is what Pitt noted when he said of Burns's poems that no verse since Shakespeare's has so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature. I should venture to hint that in this gift of perfect spontaneity Burns was even beyond Shakespeare. . . . At the basis of all his powers lay absolute truthfulness, intense reality, truthfulness to the objects which he saw, truthfulness to himself as the seer of them. . . . He expressed what he saw, not in the stock phrase of books, but in his own vernacular, the language of his fireside, with a directness, a force, a vitality that tingled to the finger tips."—*Principal Shairp*.

"Burns has one of the noblest qualities a man can possess—entire sincerity with himself. . . . And his only wish was not to produce fine-spun notions or to please the critics but to touch the heart."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"No poet since the Psalmist of Israel ever gave the world more assurance of a man; none lived a life more strenuous, engaged in eternal conflict of the passions and by them overcome—'mighty and mightily fallen.'"—*Andrew Lang*.

"His character was remarkable for its manliness, its sincerity, and its independence. . . . Where can we find another poet with an imagination capable of so idealizing the subject and yet so familiar with its details as to present a picture as true as it is beautiful?"—*Emerson*.

"After full retrospect of his works and life, the 'odd kind

chiel ' remains to my heart and brain as almost the tenderest, manliest, dearest flesh-and-blood figure in all the streams and clusters of by-gone poets. . . . He treats fresh, often coarse, natural occurrences, loves, persons, not like many new and some old poets in a genteel style of gilt and china, or at second or third removes, but in their own atmosphere, laughter, sweat, unction."—*Walt Whitman*.

" He kept his honesty and truth,  
His independent tongue and pen,  
And moved in manhood as in youth,  
Pride of his fellow men.

. . . . .

A kind, true heart, a spirit high,  
That could not fear and would not bow,  
Were written in his manly eye  
And on his manly brow."—*Fitz-Greene Halleck*.

" There was a thorough and prevailing honesty about Burns—that freedom from disguise and simple truth of character, to the preservation of which rustic life is eminently favorable. He was open and frank in social intercourse, and his poems are but the sincere records and out-pourings of his mature feelings. . . . Burns lost not the susceptibility of his conscience nor the sincerity and manliness of his character."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

" He had a real heart of flesh and blood beating in his bosom—you can almost hear it throb. He has made us as well acquainted with himself as it is possible to be, has let out the honest impulses of his native disposition, the unequal conflict of the passions in his breast, with the same frankness and truth of description."—*William Hazlitt*.

" For the first time this man spoke as men speak, or rather as they think, without premeditation, with a mixture of all styles, familiar and terrible, hiding an emotion under a joke, tender and jeering in the same place, apt to place side by side

tap-room trivialities and the high language of poetry. . . .  
 At last, after so many years, we escape from measured declamation, we hear a man's voice. . . . So indifferent was he to rules, content to exhibit his feeling as it came to him and as he felt it."—*Taine*.

"Even in his most graceless sneer, his fault—if fault it be—is that he cannot and will not pretend to respect that which he knows to be unworthy of respect."—*Charles Kingsley*.

"Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth  
 He sang, his genius glinted forth—

. . . . .  
   It showed my youth  
 How Verse may build a princely throne on humble  
 truth."—*Wordsworth*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,  
 Nor am I even the thing I could be,  
 But, twenty times, I rather would be  
                                   An atheist clean  
 Than under gospel colours hid be,  
                                   Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,  
 An honest man may like a lass,  
 But mean revenge an' malice fause  
                                   He'll still disdain,  
 An' then cry zeal for Gospel laws  
                                   Like some we ken."

—*Epistle to the Rev. John McMath*.

"It's no in titles nor in rank,  
 It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,  
       To purchase peace and rest :  
 It's no in making muckle mair,  
 It's no in books ; it's no in lear  
       To make us truly blest ;



. If happiness hae not her seat  
 And center in the breast,  
 We may be wise or rich or great,  
 But never can be blest."

—*Epistle to Davie.*

" All hail, Religion ! maid divine !  
 Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,  
 Who in her rough imperfect line  
 Thus dares to name thee ;  
 To stigmatize false friends of thine,  
 Can ne'er defame thee."

—*Epistle to the Rev. John McMath.*

**2. Tenderness—Pathos.**—"Tears lie in him, and consuming fire, as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud ; . . . and yet he is sweet and soft, sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet and soft as their parting tear. . . . A thousand battle-fields remain unsung ; but the Wounded Hare has not perished without its memorial. . . . How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal nature, and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning ! 'The Daisy' falls not unheeded under his ploughshare, nor the ruined nest of that 'wee, sleek-it, cowrin' tim'rous beastie,' cast forth, after all its provident pains, to thole the sleety dribble, and cranneuch cauld."—*Carlyle.*

"As for his tenderness—the quality without which all other poetic excellence is barren—it gushes forth toward every creature, animate and inanimate, with one exception, namely, the hypocrite."—*Charles Kingsley.*

"His forte was in humor and in pathos—or rather in tenderness of feeling. . . . His tenderness is of two sorts ; that which is combined with circumstances and characters of humble and sometimes ludicrous simplicity, and that which is produced by gloomy and distressful impressions acting on

a mind of keen sensibility. . . . The exquisite description of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' affords perhaps the finest example of this the finest sort of pathos. . . . The charm of the fine lines written on turning up a mouse's nest with the plough will also be found to consist in the simple tenderness of delineation. . . . The verses to a 'Mountain Daisy,' though more elegant and picturesque, seem to derive their chief beauty from the same tone of sentiment. . . . Sometimes it is the brief and simple pathos of an old ballad. . . . Sometimes it is animated with airy narrative and adorned with images of the utmost elegance and beauty. . . . Sometimes, again, it is plaintive and mournful, in the same strain of unaffected sympathy."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"He speaks to the Devil, in his address to that personage, as to an unfortunate comrade, a disagreeable fellow, but fallen into trouble. . . . Burns pities, and that sincerely, a wounded hare, a mouse whose nest was upturned by his plough, a mountain daisy. Is there such a great difference between man and beast and plant?"—*Taine*.

"In Burns the further widening of human sympathies is shown in the new tenderness for animals. The birds, sheep, cattle, and wild creatures of the wood and field fill as large a space in the poetry of Burns as in that of Wordsworth and Coleridge. . . . He transfers the depths of his personal affection to natural objects, and speaks of them with often a sudden tenderness and exquisite mournfulness of pity or as quick sympathy with their joy."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"We love him not for sweetest song,

Tho' never tone so tender."—*O. W. Holmes*.

"With familiar tenderness he dwelt on the lower creatures, felt for their sufferings, as if they had been his own, and opened men's hearts to feel how much the groans of creation are needlessly increased by the indifference or cruelty of man.—*J. C. Shairp*.

"It is not everyone who can perceive the sublimity of a daisy or the pathos to be extracted from a withered thorn."  
—*William Hazlitt*.

"It was this notable amount of backbone and force of arm, sensibly felt in his utterances, which gave to his pathos and tenderness such healthy grace and such rare freedom from anything that savored of sentimentality. The Christian element of pity also had a deep fount in his rich human heart, and a tear of common blooded affinity was ever ready to be dropt, not only over the sorrows of an injured woman, but over the pangs of a hunted hare or the terror of a startled field-mouse."—*John Stuart Blackie*.

"Of all the men that ever lived, Burns was least of a sentimentalist. He was your true man of feeling. He did not preach to Christian people of the duty of humanity to animals; he spoke of them in winning words, warm from the manliest breast, as his fellow-creatures, and made us feel what we owe.  
. . . His nature was indeed human; and the tenderness and kindliness apparent in every page of his poetry—and most of all in his Songs—cannot but have a humanizing effect on all those exposed by the necessities of their condition to many causes for ever at work to harden or shut up the heart.  
. . . With a rare power of pathos and artless eloquence, which could invest a common daisy with human life and interest and infuse into the breast of the hare, the mouse, or the little bird, a microcosm of human feeling and emotion, Burns, with no less poetic power and tenderness, but with more practical philosophy, went down into the very heart of the Scottish peasant and brought forth materials with which to form a noble and a perfect man."—*John Wilson* [Christopher North.]

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Wee, sleekit, cowrin’, tim’rous beastie,  
 O, what a panic’s in thy breastie !  
 Thou need na start awa sae hasty,  
 Wi’ bickering brattle ! [hurry]  
 I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,  
 Wi’ murd’ring pattle ! [paddle]

I’m truly sorry man’s dominion  
 Has broken Nature’s social union,  
 An’ justified that ill opinion  
 Which makes thee startle  
 At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,  
 An’ fellow-mortal.”—*Address To a Mouse.*

“Why, ye tenants of the lake,  
 For me your watery haunts forsake ?  
 Tell me, fellow-creatures, why  
 At my presence thus you fly ;  
 Why disturb your social joys,  
 Parent, filial, kindred ties ?  
 Common friend to you and me,  
 Nature’s gifts to all are free.”  
 —*On Scaring Some Water-Fowl.*

“Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,  
 The bitter little that of life remains ;  
 No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains  
 To thee shall home or food or pastime yield.  
 Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,  
 No more of rest, but now thy dying bed !  
 The sheltering rushes whistling o’er thy head,  
 The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.”  
 —*On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp By.*

3. **Vigor—Spirit.**—“Burns expressed what he saw, not in the stock phrases of books, but in his own vernacular, the language of his fireside, with a directness, a force, a vitality,

that tingled to the fingertips, and forced the phrases of his peasant dialect into literature, and made them forever classical. . . . Burns's keenness of insight keeps pace with his keenness of feeling. . . . Here was a man, a son of toil looking out on the world from his cottage, on society high and low, and on nature homely or beautiful, with the clearest eye, a most piercing insight, . . . seeing to the core all the sterling worth, nor less the pretence and hollowness of the men he met, the humor, the drollery, the pathos and the sorrow of human existence."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"Observe with what a fierce, prompt force he grasps his subject, be what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eyes; full and clear in every lineament; and catches the real type and essence of it amid the thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! . . . Of the strength, the piercing emphasis with which he thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigor and laconic pith? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole phase. We discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength, and can understand how, in conversation, his quick, sure insight into men may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country. . . . If we look at his general force of soul, his healthy robustness, every way, the rugged downrightness, penetration, generous valor, and manfulness that was in him—where shall we readily find a better-gifted man? . . . Burns is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. . . . In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigor of his strictly intellectual perceptions."—*Carlyle*.

"We may say of him without excess that his style was his slave. Hence that energy so concise, so telling that a foreigner

is tempted to explain it by some special richness or aptitude in the dialect he wrote. . . . It was by his style and not by his matter that he affected Wordsworth and the world. . . . They [his works] interest us not in themselves but because they have passed through the spirit of so genuine and vigorous a man. Such is the stamp of living literature, and there was never any more alive than that of Burns."—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

"The fire and fervor without which lyrical poetry is scarce worthy of the name, Burns possessed in a high degree. . . . He was emphatically a strong man; there was, as Carlyle says, 'a certain rugged sterling worth about him,' which makes his songs as good as sermons sometimes, and sometimes as good as battles. . . . But it is not simply fire from within, consuming itself in the glow of some special pet enthusiasm, but it was a fire that went out contagiously and seized whatever fuel it might find in the motley fair of the largest human life. . . . Then again, the general vigor of mind was as notable as his vigor of body; he was as strong in thought as intense in emotion."—*John Stuart Blackie.*

"Who can praise them [Burns's poems] too highly, who admire in them too much the humor, the scorn, the wisdom, the unsurpassed energy and courage."—*Andrew Lang.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A fig for those by law protected !  
 Liberty's a glorious feast !  
 Courts for cowards were erected,  
 Churches built to please the priest.

. . . . .

Life is all a variorum,  
 We regard not how it goes;  
 Let them cant about decorum,  
 Who have characters to lose."

—*The Jolly Beggars.*

“ The wind blew as ’twad blawn its last ;  
 The rattling show’rs rose on the blast ;  
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallow’d ;  
 Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow’d ;  
 That night, a child might understand  
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Before him doon pours all his floods ;  
 The doubling storm roars thro’ the woods ;  
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole ;  
 Near and more near the thunders roll.”

—*Tam O’ Shanter.*

“ Though I canna ride in weell-booted pride,  
 And flee o’er the hills like a crow, man,  
 I can haud up my head wi’ the best o’ the breed,  
 Though fluttering ever so braw, man.”

—*The Tarbolton Lasses.*

✓ 4. **Patriotism.**—Carlyle’s estimate of the value of Burns’s songs is hardly exaggerated, and yet, though in severely straitened circumstances when he composed the most and the best of these songs, Burns proudly refused to accept any remuneration; and “he appears to have been taken at his word by every one concerned.” Burns wrote to his friend Mrs. Dunlop: “Scottish scenes and Scottish stories are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued by the routine of business, for which heaven knows I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers and venerable ruins over the honored abodes of her heroes.”

“In no heart did the love of country burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns. ‘A tide of Scottish prejudice,’ as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, ‘had been poured along’ his veins; and he felt that it would boil there until the flood-gates ‘shut in eternal rest.’ . . . But his

example in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects could not but operate from afar. It seemed to him as if he could do so little for his country, and yet he would have gladly done all."—*Carlyle*.

"He made the poorest ploughman proud of his station and toil, since Bobbie Burns had shared and sung them. . . . He had longed from his boyhood to shed upon the unknown streams of his native Ayrshire some of the power which generations of minstrels had shed upon Yarrow and Tweed. Burns in his poetry was not only the interpreter of Scotland's peasantry, he was the restorer of her nationality. . . . Among these literary men in walked Burns, who, with the instinct of genius, chose for his subject that Scottish life which they ignored and for his vehicle that vernacular which they despised, and who, touching the springs of long-forgotten emotions, brought back on the hearts of his countrymen a tide of patriotic feeling to which they had long been strangers."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"His patriotism was of the true poetic kind—intense—exclusive. Scotland and the climate of Scotland were to his eyes the dearest in Nature—Scotland and the people of Scotland were and had been such as to starve the flame of patriotism. . . . A peasant appeared and set himself to check the creeping pestilence of this indifference. Whatever genius has since been devoted to the illustration of the national manners and sustaining thereby the national feeling of the people, there can be no doubt that Burns will be remembered as the founder and alas! in his own person as the martyr of this reformation."—*J. G. Lockhart*.

"To have recreated that national feeling, that deep and unquenchable patriotism which has made Scotland, small and poor, a force in the great universe, is no small work."—*Macaulay*.

"Burns is a thorough Scotchman—the flavor of the soil can be tasted in everything he wrote."—*Emerson*.



"The special nationality of Scotch poetry is stronger in Burns's poetry than in any of his predecessors, but it is also mingled with a larger view of man than the merely national one. . . . He keeps himself throughout to Scottish subjects ; his scenery is entirely Scottish, his love of liberty concentrates itself round Scottish struggles ; his muse is wholly untraveller. . . . When the muse of Scotland appeared to him, she bade him sing his own people ; her mantle was adorned with the rivers, hills, and boroughs of Scotland, and in her face was the character of Scotland's poets."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Another quality Burns possessed in an eminent degree, a quality which tended to make him the idol of his countrymen, and that was patriotism, a virtue which, as Carlyle remarks, was, in the days of Hume and Robertson and Blair, anything but common in the literary atmosphere of Scotland. . . . On one point there can be no controversy, the poetry of Burns has had the most powerful influence in reviving and strengthening the national feelings of his countrymen. Amidst penury and labor, his youth fed on the old minstrelsy and traditional glories of his nation, and his genius divined that what he felt so deeply must belong to a spirit that might lie smothered around him, but could not be extinguished, and that was the spirit of patriotism."—*John Stuart Blackie*.

"The poor man, as he speaks of Robert Burns, always holds up his head and regards you with an elated look. A tender thought of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' or a bold thought of 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' may come across him ; and he who in such a spirit loves home and country, by whose side may he not walk an equal in the broad eye of day as it shines over our Scottish hills?"—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

"Burns is, in fact, the demigod, prophet, priest, and king of Scotland. . . . This is, after all, the greatest of Burns's poetical merits—that he has Scotized poetry, . . . and

has drawn to him the hearts of his countrymen like the draft of a roaring fiery furnace."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!

For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent;  
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil  
Be blest with health and peace and sweet content!  
And, Oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent  
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!  
Then, howe'er crown and coronets be rent,  
A virtuous populace may rise the while,  
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle."

—*The Cotter's Saturday Night*.

"Wild beats my heart to brace your steps,  
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,  
Through hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps  
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:  
Even I who sing in rustic lore,  
Haply my sires have left their shed,  
And faced grim Danger's loudest roar,  
Bold-following where your fathers led!"

—*Address to Edinburgh*.

"Wha for Scotland's King and law  
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,  
Free man stand, or free man fa',  
Caledonian! on wi' me!"—*Bannockburn*.

### 5. Broad Human Sympathy—Moral Insight.—

"No wonder the Scottish peasantry have loved Burns as perhaps never people loved a poet. He not only sympathized with the wants, the trials, the joys, the sorrows of their obscure lot, but he interpreted these to themselves, and interpreted them to others, and too in their own language, made musical and glorified by genius. . . . What flashes of moral insight, piercing to the quick! What random sayings

flung forth that have become proverbs in all lands—mottoes of the heart. . . . He interpreted the lives, thoughts, feelings, manners of the Scottish peasantry to whom he belonged, as they had never been interpreted before and never can be again. . . . Of his instinctive knowledge of men of all ranks there is no need to speak, for every line attests it. . . . Of his songs, one main characteristic is that their subjects, the substance they lay hold of, belongs to what is most permanent in humanity—those primary affections, those permanent relations of life which cannot change while man's nature remains what it is. In this they are wholly unlike the songs which seize on the changing aspects of society. . . . Happy as a singer Burns was in this, that his own strong nature, his birth, and all his circumstances, conspired to fix his interest on the primary and permanent affections, the great fundamental relations of life, which men have always with them—not on the social conventions and ephemeral modes, which are here to-day, forgotten in the next generation. . . . Burns's sympathy and thoughts were not confined to class and country; they had something more catholic in them, they reached to universal man."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"All his religion, he says, came from the heart; and it drove him—when he thought of this poor people and their hard lives, and how beautiful they often were with maternal feeling; when he thought how much they suffered and how much was due to them, to refer the origin of their good to God and to leave the righting of their wrongs to God. . . . Being thus himself poor . . . and having in him . . . a heart to love and enjoy all beauty and to feel all that was human, and being insensibly influenced by the spirit of the time, he threw into the tender and humorous song the sorrows and affections of his own class, their religion and their passions, their amusements and their toil, till all the world laughed and wept with the Ayrshire ploughman."—*Stopford Brooke*

"He carries us into the humble scenes of life, not to make

us dole out our tribute of charitable compassion to paupers and cottagers, but to make us feel with them on equal terms, to make us enter with them into their passions and interests and share our hearts with them as with brothers and sisters of the same species."—*Thomas Campbell*.

"But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men! What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; that generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen whom he prizes as the paragons of Earth. . . . And thus over the lowest provinces of man's existence he pours the glory of his own soul. . . . In hut and in hall as the heart unfolds itself in the many-colored joy and woe of existence, the name, the voice of that joy and woe is the name and the voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no [other] British man has so deeply affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest. . . . We see in him the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor of a hero. . . . He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit."—*Carlyle*.

"What a gust of sympathy there is in him, sometimes flowing out in by-ways hitherto unused, upon mice, flowers, and the Devil himself; sometimes speaking plainly between human hearts; sometimes ringing out in exultation like a peal of bells!"—*Robert Louis Stevenson*.

"But still the music of his song  
Rises o'er all elate and strong;  
Its master-chords  
Are Manhood, Freedom, Brotherhood."

—*Longfellow*.

“ We praise him not for gifts divine,  
His muse was born of woman,  
His manhood breathes in every line—  
Was ever heart more human ?

We love him, praise him, just for this :  
In every form and feature,  
Through wealth and want, through woe and bliss,  
He saw his fellow-creature.”

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

“ But who his human heart has laid  
To Nature’s bosom nearer ?  
Who sweetened toil like him, repaid  
To love a tribute dearer ?

Through all his tuneful art, how strong  
The human feeling gushes !  
The very moonlight of his song  
Is warm with smiles and blushes ! ”—*Whittier.*

“ He is a human creature, only overflowing with the characteristics of humanity. To him belong, in large measure, the passions and the powers of his race. He professes no exemption from the common lot. . . . Rarely and richly were mingled in him the elements of human nature. His crowning distinction is a larger soul ; and this he carried into all things.”—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

“ Burns had as deep an insight as ever man had into the moral evils of the poor man’s character, condition, and life. . . . Not an occurrence in hamlet, village, or town, affecting in any way the happiness of the human heart, but roused as keen an interest in the soul of Burns and as genial a sympathy as if it had immediately concerned himself and his own individual welfare. . . . No poet ever lived more constantly and more intimately in the hearts of a people. . . . There is no other writer except Shakespeare who

shares to the same extent, notwithstanding he wrote in a provincial dialect, a like universal sympathy or the same universal appreciation."—*James Grant Wilson*.

"It is that language of the heart  
In which the answering heart would speak,  
Thought, word, that bids the warm tear start,  
Or the smile light the cheek :

And his that music to whose tone  
The common pulse of man keeps time,  
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,  
In cold or sunny clime."—*Fitz-Greene Halleck*.

"Burns has made his appearance to convince the loftiest of the noble and the daintiest of the learned, that wherever human nature is at work, the eye of the poet may discover rich elements of his art ; that over Christian Europe, at all events, purity of sentiment and the fervor of passion may be combined with sagacity of intellect, with shrewdness, humor, and whatever elevates and delights the mind ; not more easily amidst the most complicated transactions of the most polished societies than in his 'huts where poor men lie.'"—*J. G. Lockhart*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Then gently scan your brother man,  
Still gentler sister Woman ;  
Tho' they may gang a kennie [trifle] wrang,  
To step aside is human :  
One point must still be greatly dark,  
The moving Why they do it ;  
And just as lamely can ye mark  
How far, perhaps, they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone  
Decidedly can try us,  
He knows each chord—its various tone,  
Each spring—its various bias :

Then at the balance let's be mute,  
 We never can adjust it ;  
 What's done we partly may compute,  
 But know not what's resisted."

—*Address to the Unco Guid.*

" To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,  
 When banes are crazed and bluid is thin,  
 Is doubtless great distress !  
 Yet then content could make us blest ;  
 E'en then sometimes we'd snatch a taste  
 Of truest happiness.  
 The honest heart that's free frae a'  
 Intended fraud or guile,  
 However Fortune kick the ba'  
 Has aye some cause to smile."

—*Epistle to Davie.*

" I've noticed, on our Laird's court-day,  
 An' mony a time my heart's been wae,  
 Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,  
 How they mon thole a factor's snash :

I see how folks live that hae riches ;  
 But surely poor folks maun be wretches."

—*The Twa Dogs.*

**6. Scorn—Indignation—Ridicule.**—This most powerful weapon in the hands of Burns was generally directed against the cant and hypocrisy which his honest eyes saw too clearly in all the ways of men and especially against hypocrisy in religion.

" The indignation which makes verses, is, properly speaking, an inverted love ; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. . . . Of the verses which indignation makes, Burns has given us among the best that were ever given."—*Carlyle.*

"Since Voltaire, no literary man in religious matters was more bitter or more jocose. . . . What he made fun of was official worship; but as for religion, the language of the soul, he was greatly attached to it."—*Taine*.

"But never since bright earth was born  
In rapture of the enkindling morn,  
Might god-like wrath and sinlike scorn,  
That was and is  
And shall be while false weeds are worn,  
Find words like his."

—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"Not Latimer nor Luther struck more telling blows against false theology than did this brave singer. . . . His satire has lost none of its edge. His musical arrows yet sing through the air."—*Emerson*.

"The first peculiarity is the undisciplined harshness and acrimony of his invective. . . . His epigrams and lampoons appear to us, one and all, unworthy of him, offensive from their extreme coarseness and violence, and contemptible from their want of wit and brilliancy. They seem to have been written not out of fierce and ungovernable anger. His whole raillery consists in railing; and his satirical vein displays itself chiefly in calling names and swearing. We say this mainly with reference to his personalities. In many of his more general representations of life and manners, there is no doubt much that may be called satirical, mixed up with admirable humor and description of inimitable vivacity."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"Insincerity and pretension completely disgusted him. Scarcely does he betray the slightest impatience with his fellows, except in expressing and ridiculing these traits. 'Holy Willie's Prayer' and a few similar effusions were penned as protests against bigotry and presumption."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"The vigor of his satire, the severity of illustration with



which his fancy instantly supplied him, bore down all retort.'—*Sir Walter Scott.*

“ Burns possessed great force as a satirist, for a satirist of the most pungent order unquestionably he was—too much, in fact, for his own peaceable march through life, . . . but not too much for public correction and reproof when, as in the case of ‘ Holy Willie ’ and ‘ The Holy Fair,’ the lash was wisely and effectively wielded. . . . In connection with his power of seizing the striking features of character, must be mentioned his tremendous force as a satirist.”—*John Stuart Blackie.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Hear how he clears the points o’ faith  
 Wi’ rattlin’ an’ wi’ thumpin’ !  
 Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,  
 He’s stampin’ and he’s jumpin’ !  
 His lengthened chin, his turned up snout,  
 His eldritch [unearthly] squeal an’ gestures,  
 O how they fire the heart devout,  
 Like cantharidian plasters,  
     On sic a day !  
 . . . . .  
 A vast, unbottomed, boundless pit,  
 Fill’d fou [full] o’ lowin [flaming] brunstane [brimstone],  
 Wha’s raging flame an’ scorching heat,  
 Wad melt the hardest whunstane [whinstone] !  
 The half asleep start up wi’ fear,  
 An’ think they hear it roarin’,  
 When presently it does appear  
     ’Twas but some neebor snorin’,  
     Asleep that day.  
 . . . . .  
 How monie hearts this day converts  
     O’ sinners an’ o’ lasses !  
 Their hearts o’ stane, gin night, are gane  
     As saft as on’y flesh is.  
 There’s some are fou o’ love divine,  
     There’s some are fou o’ brandy,” &c.—*The Holy Fair.*

“ When frae my mither’s womb I fell,  
 Thou might hae plunged me into Hell,  
 To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,  
     In burnin’ lake,  
 Where damned devils roar and yell,  
     Chain’d to a stake.”

—*Holy Willie’s Prayer.*

“ He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,  
 Or nobly fling the gospel club,  
 And New-light herds could nicely drub,  
     Or pay their skin ;  
 Could shake them ower the burning dub [pit]  
     Or heave them in.”—*The Twa Herds.*

**7. Picturesqueness—Descriptive Power.**—“ No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance. Three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness. And in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and yet the burning of a Retzch is not more expressive or exact. . . . It is reverence, it is love towards all Nature that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise.”  
 —*Carlyle.*

“ For all aspects of the natural world he has the same clear eye, the same open heart that he has for man. His love of nature is intense, but very simple and direct; no subtilizings nor refinings about it, nor any of that nature-worship which soon after his time came in. . . . Everywhere in his poetry nature comes in, not so much as a being independent of man but as the background of his pictures of life and human character. . . . In ‘Halloween’ he has sketched the Ayrshire peasantry as they appeared in their hours of merriment—painted with a few vivid strokes a dozen distinct pictures of country lads and lasses, sires and dames,

and at the same time preserved forever the remembrance of the antique customs and superstitious observances, which, even in Burns's day, were beginning to fade, and have now all but disappeared. . . . How true his perceptions of her [Nature's] features are, how pure and transparent the feelings she awakens in him! . . . Scottish Lowland scenery is never so truly and vividly described as when Burns uses his own vernacular. . . . Everywhere with him man, his feelings and his fate, stand out in the front of his pictures, and Nature comes in as the delightful background—yet Nature loved with a love, beheld with a rapture, all the more genuine because his pulses throbbed in such intense sympathy with man. Every reader can recall many a wonderful line, sometimes a whole verse in his love-songs, in which the surrounding landscape is flashed on the mind's eye."

—*J. C. Shairp.*

"He has in all his compositions great force of conception and great spirit and animation in its expression. He has taken a large range through the region of Fancy, and naturalized himself in almost all her climates. He has . . . great powers of description. There is another fragment, also, called 'Vision,' which belongs to a higher order of poetry. If Burns had never written anything else, the power of description and the vigor of the whole composition would have entitled him to the remembrance of posterity."—

*Francis Jeffrey.*

"Touched by his hand, the way-side weed  
Becomes a flower ; the lowliest reed  
Beside the stream  
Is clothed with beauty ; gorse and grass  
And heather, where his footsteps pass,  
The brighter seem."—*Longfellow.*

"The dialect of Burns was fitted to deal with any subject ; and whether it was a stormy night, a shepherd's collie, a sheep struggling in the snow, the conduct of cowardly

soldiers in the field, the gait and cogitations of a drunken man, or only a village cock-crow in the morning, he could find language to give it freshness, body, and relief."—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

"He could describe with admirable fidelity and force incidents, scenes, manners, characters, or whatever else, which had fallen within his experience or observation."—*G. L. Craik.*

"His page is a lively image of the contemporary life and country from which he sprung."—*Thomas Campbell.*

"But within the range, it [his description] is perfect; it is never exaggerated, nothing is forced or over-dwelt on; it is the natural and swift reproduction of the landscape, and all that is said sounds sweetly and smells sweetly to the sense."—*Stopford Brooke.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Admiring Nature in her wildest grace  
 These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;  
 O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,  
 Th' abodes of covered grouse and timid sheep,  
 My savage journey, curious, I pursue.  
 Till famed Breadalbane opens to my view—  
 The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,  
 The woods, wild-scattered, clothe their ample sides;  
 Th' outstretching lake embosomed 'mong the hills,  
 The eye with wonder and amazement fills;  
 The Tay meandering sweet in infant pride,  
 The palace rising on its verdant side;  
 The lawns wood-fringed in Nature's native taste,  
 The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste;  
 The arches striding o'er the new-born stream;  
 The village glittering in the noontide beam!"  
 —*Written with a Pencil, Etc.*

"November chill blows loud wi' angry sugh;  
 The short'ning winter day is near a close;  
 The miry beasts retreating frae the plugh;  
 The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose

The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,  
 This night his weekly moil is at an end,  
 Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,  
 Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend !”  
 —*The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

“Upon a summer Sunday morn,  
 When Nature's face is fair,  
 I walked forth to view the corn,  
 And snuff the cooler air.  
 The risin' sun o'er Galston muirs  
 Wi' glorious light was glintin ;  
 The hares were hirplin down the furs,  
 The lav'rocks they were chantin.”  
 —*For Sweet That Day.*

✓ 8. **Kindly Humor—Sportiveness.**—Unlike most writers, Burns has equal command of both extremes of satire—of the kind that stings (already noticed) and the kind that excites only a good-natured smile.

“Under a lighter characteristic, the same principle of love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns, and of all true poets, occasionally manifests itself in the shape of humor. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns ; he rises to the high and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all caricature ; for this is drollery rather than humor ; but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him, and comes forth, here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches. . . . As in his ‘Address to the Mouse,’ or the ‘Farmer's Mare,’ or in his ‘Elegy on Poor Mailie,’ which last may be reckoned as his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a humor as fine as that of Sterne ; yet altogether different, original, peculiar—the humor of Burns.”—*Carlyle.*

“He has genuine gaiety, a glow of jocularity ; laughter commends itself to him ; he praises it as well as good suppers

of good comrades, where wine is plentiful, pleasantry abounds, ideas pour forth, poetry sparkles, and causes a carnival of beautiful figures and good-humored people to move about in the human brain."—*Taine*.

"It was in the humorous, the comic, the satirical, that he first tried and proved his strength. Exulting to find that a rush of words was ready at his will—that no sooner flashed his fancies than on the instant they were embodied, he waned and revelled among the subjects that had always seemed to him the most risible, whatever the kind of laughter, simple or compound—pure mirth or a mixture of mirth and contempt, even of indignation and scorn—mirth still being the chief ingredient that qualifies the whole."—*Professor Wilson*.

"Where is the wooing-match that for pointed humor and drollery can compare with that of Duncan Gray, when 'Meg was deaf as Cùsa Craig,' and Duncan 'spak o' lowpin o'er him'? These are lines that for happy humor none but Burns could have hit off."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"His humor comes from him in a stream so deep and easy that I will venture to call him the best of humorous poets."—*Robert Louis Stevenson*.

"Such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected by vivid poetical descriptions, is not perhaps to be paralleled in the English language."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"One notable feature in his genius—a feature which has not seldom been wanting in the greatest of minds—is humor, a certain sportive fence of the soul delighting in the significant conjunction of contraries, a quality peculiarly Scotch, and which in Scotchmen seems a counterpoise graciously provided by Nature to that overcharge of thought—fulness and seriousness, which so strikingly contrasts them with their Hibernian cousins across the channel."—*John Stuart Blackie*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ For Lords or Kings I dinna mourn,  
 E’en let them die—for that they’re born:  
 But oh! prodigious to reflect!  
 A Towmont [Twelvemonth], Sirs, is gane to wreck!  
 O Eighty-eight, in thy sma’ space  
 What dire events hae taken place!  
 Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!  
 In what a pickle thou hast left us!  
 The Spanish empire’s tint [lost] a head,  
 And my auld teethless Bawtie’s dead!  
 The tulzie’s [quarrel] sair ’tween Pitt an’ Fox,  
 An’ ’tween our Maggie’s twa wee cocks.”

—*Elegy on the Year 1788.*

“ As ye gae up by yon hillside,  
 Speer in for bonny Bessy,  
 She’ll gae ye a beck, and bid ye licht,  
 And handsomely address ye.  
 There’s few sae bonnie, nane sae guid,  
 In a’ king George’s dominion;  
 If ye should doubt the truth of this—  
 It’s Bessy’s ain opinion.”—*The Tarbolton Lasses.*

“ I wadna been surprised to spy  
 You on an auld wife’s flainen toy [flannel cap]:  
 Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,  
     On’s wyliecoat [flannel waistcoat];  
 But Miss’s fine Lunardi! fie!  
     How dare ye do ’t?”

—*To a Louse on a Lady’s Bonnet.*

**9. Warmth of Affection.**—“ He is a man of the most impassioned temper; with passions not strong only but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. . . . What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling; what trustful, boundless love; what generous exaggeration of the object loved! His rustic friend, his nut-

brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of the earth. . . . Poetry is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart. . . . And so kind and warm a soul; so full of in-born riches, of love to all living and lifeless things."—*Carlyle*.

"The earliest poem he composed was in his seventeenth summer; a simple love-song in praise of a girl who was his companion in the harvest field. The last strain he breathed was from his death-bed in remembrance of some former affection. . . . He had a compassionate sympathy for the old nameless song-makers of his country, lying in their unknown graves, all Scotland over. . . . And then his humanity was not confined to man, it overflowed to his lower fellow-creatures. His lines about the pet ewe, the worn-out mare, the field-mouse, the wounded hare, have long been household words. Observe the peculiar intensity of his nature, the fervid heart, the trembling sensibility, the headlong passion, all thrilling through an intellect strong and keen beyond that of other men."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"He was always in love. He made love the great end of existence to such a degree, that at the club which he founded . . . every member was obliged to be the declared lover of one or more fair ones."—*Tuine*.

"He sings of love, whose flame illumines  
The darkness of lone cottage rooms:  
He feels the force,  
The treacherous undertone and stress,  
Of wayward passions, and no less  
The keen remorse."—*Longfellow*.

"It is true that his love of Nature was always linked with some vehement or some sweet affection for living creatures, and that it was for the sake of the humanity that she cherishes in her bosom that she was dear to him as his own life blood. . . .



In nothing else is the sincerity of his soul more apparent than in his friendships; all who had ever been kind to him he loved to the last. . . . Ay, for many a deep reason the Scottish people love their own Robert Burns. Never was the personal character of a poet so strongly and endearingly exhibited in his song. They love him because he loved his own order, nor ever desired for a single moment to quit it. They love him because he loved the very humblest condition of humanity, where everything good was only the more commended to his manly mind by disadvantages of social position."—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The day returns, my bosom burns,  
The blissful day we twa did meet,  
Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,  
Ne'er summer sun was half sae sweet.  
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,  
And crosses o'er the sultry line;  
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes;—  
Heaven gave me more, it made thee mine."

—*The Blissful Day.*

"All hail, ye tender feelings dear!  
The smile of love, the friendly tear,  
The sympathetic glow!  
Long since, this world's thorny ways  
Had number'd out my weary days,  
Had it not been for you!  
Fate still has blest me with a friend,  
In every care and ill."—*Epistle to Davie.*

"But round my heart the ties are bound,  
That heart transpierc'd with many a wound:  
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,  
To leave the bonny banks of Ayr.  
. . . . .

Farewell, my friends! Farewell, my foes!  
 My peace with these, my love with those—  
 The bursting tears my heart declare;  
 Farewell, the bonny banks of Ayr."

—*The Author's Farewell to His Native Country.*

### ✓ 10. Conviviality — Coarseness — Sensuality. —

Those critics who are disposed to "cast the first stone" at Burns find, alas! abundant justification in his poems. Those who, like Burns, are disposed to "gently scan your brother man," will exclaim with Principal Shairp: "How mysterious to reflect that the same qualities on their emotional side made him the great songster of the world, and on their practical side drove him to ruin!" All Burns's critics agree that much of the coarseness in the poet's writing is due to the unfortunate influence of that coterie of "heavy country wits" in the village of Mauchline who admitted Burns to their choice circle and thus gave him his first "rise in the world." Prior to the time of his entrance into this circle, there was little in Burns's verses to call for reproach. The applause and the stimulus of these cronies must be recognized as the cause of much of what we most regret in the poet's life and work. Illustrations of this quality of Burns are too plentiful to need citing. His two masterpieces, "The Jolly Beggars" and "Tam o' Shanter," afford abundant specimens.

"The poems and even some of the songs of Burns are not free from grossness, which he himself regretted to the last. . . . In 'The Jolly Beggars,' . . . the materials are so coarse and the sentiment so gross as to make it, for all its dramatic power, offensive."—*J. C. Shairp.*

"The leading vice in Burns's character, and the cardinal deformity, indeed, of all his productions, was his contempt, or affectation of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity. . . . This is the very slang of the worst German plays and the lowest of our town-made

novels; nor can anything be more lamentable than that it should have found a patron in such a man as Burns and communicated to many of his productions a character of immorality, at once contemptible and hateful. . . . It is humiliating to think how deeply Burns has fallen into this debasing error. He is perpetually making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and impudence, and talking, with much complacency and exultation, of the offence he has occasioned to the sober and correct part of mankind."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"He carried conviviality to an excess, violated his own principles of virtue, and grafted license upon love."—*Henry Ward Beecher*.

"You [Burns] combined in certain of your letters a libertine theory with your practice, you poured out in your song and raptures your shame and your scorn."—*Andrew Lang*.

"Burns was as free of action as he was of words; broad jests crop up freely in his verses. He calls himself an unregenerate heathen, and he is right. . . . It seems to me that by his nature he was in love with all women. . . . It was the excess of sap which overflowed within him and soiled the bark. Doubtless he did not boast of these excesses, he rather repented of them."—*Taine*.

"Burns could hardly have described the excesses of mad, hairbrained, roaring mirth and convivial indulgence, which is the soul of it, if he himself had not 'drunk full oftener of the tun than of the well.'"—*William Hazlitt*.

"To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny—for so in our ignorance we must speak—his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him; and that spirit which might have soared, could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom, and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived."—*Carlyle*.

“The magic of that countenance, making Burns at once tempter and tempted, may explain many a sad story.”—*Charles Kingsley.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“No churchman am I for to rail and to write,  
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,  
No sly man of business contriving a snare,  
For a big-bellie'd bottle 's the whole of my care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow ;  
I scorn not the peasant though ever so low ;  
But a club of good fellows like those that are here,  
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.”

—*The Big-Bellied Bottle.*

“Let other poets raise a fracas  
'Bout vines an' wines, an' drunken Bacchus  
An' crabbit names and stories wrack us,  
An' grate our lug [ear],  
I sing the juice Scots bear can mak us,  
In glass or jug.”—*Scotch Drink.*

“What is title ? what is treasure ?  
What is reputation's care ?  
If we lead a life of pleasure,  
'Tis no matter how or where !  
With the ready trick and fable,  
Round we wander all the day ;  
And at night in barn or stable,  
Hug our doxies in the hay.  
Does the train-attended carriage  
Through the country lighter rove ?  
Does the sober bed of marriage  
Witness brighter scenes of love ? ”

—*The Jolly Beggars.*

**II. Sublimity.**—“Burns is one of those men who reach down to the perennial deeps, who take rank among the heroic men. He was born in a poor Ayrshire hut. The largest

soul of all the British lands came among us in the shape of a hard-handed Scotch peasant. . . . The 'hoar visage' of winter delights him; he dwells with a sad and often-returning fondness on these scenes of solemn desolation; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for 'it raises his thoughts to him that walketh on the wings of the wind.' . . . In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of poetry and manhood. . . . But some beams from it [Burns's genius] did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colors into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gaze on with wonder and tears."—*Carlyle*.

"It ['The Cotter's Saturday Night'] is a noble and pathetic picture of human manners mingled with a fine religious awe. It comes over the mind like a slow and solemn strain of music. Repeatedly, in Burns's poems, we find touches of what the poet himself so finely calls 'the pathos and sublime of human life.' "—*William Hazlitt*.

"He rises occasionally into a strain of beautiful description or lofty sentiment, far above the pitch of his original conception."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,  
The joyless winter day,  
Let others fear, to me more dear  
Than all the pride of May:  
The tempest's howl it soothes my soul,  
My griefs it seems to join:  
The leafless trees my fancy please,  
Their fate resembles mine."—*Winter*.

"O Thou, great Governor of all below!  
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,  
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,  
And still the tumult of the raging sea:

With that controlling power assist even me  
Those headlong furious passions to confine,  
For all unfit I feel my power to be  
To rule their torrent in the allowed line:  
Oh, aid me with Thy help, omnipotence Divine."  
—*Stanzas on the Prospect of Death.*

"Ye holy walls that, still sublime,  
Resist the crumbling touch of time,  
How strongly still your form displays  
The piety of ancient days!  
As through your ruins, hoar and gray—  
Ruins yet beauteous in decay—  
The silvery moonbeams trembling fly,  
The forms of ages long gone by  
Crowd thick on Fancy's wondering eye,  
And wake the soul to musings high."  
—*Verses on the Ruins of Lincluden Abbey.*

## COWPER, 1731-1800

**Biographical Outline.** — William Cowper, born at Great Berkhamstead, November 26, 1731; father a clergyman and at one time chaplain to George II.; mother related to the poet Donne and descended indirectly from Henry II.; loses his mother at the age of six, a loss from which he never recovered; he is exceedingly timid and sensitive even as a child; soon after his mother's death Cowper is placed in the school of one Dr. Pitman, in Market Street, Hertfordshire, where he is abused and bullied by the older and stronger boys; he is removed from Dr. Pitman's school on account of inflammation of the eyes, caused, it is said, by excessive weeping, and is placed for two years in the home of an oculist; in 1741 he is placed in Westminster School, where he takes part in athletic sports and is less miserable than at Market Street; he studies Latin at Westminster under Vincent Bourne, to whom Cowper becomes attached; he becomes a good Latin scholar, and reads the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" outside of school hours with a friend; he has Warren Hastings as a school-mate at Westminster; he writes his first poem, an imitation of Phillips's "Splendid Shilling," and helps his brother John, at Cambridge, to translate the "Henriade" in 1748, while still at Westminster; he leaves Westminster in 1748, spends nine months at his home in Great Berkhamstead, and is articled, in 1749, to one Chapman, a London attorney, with whom he remains three years, completing his articles; while in London Cowper frequently visits the home of his uncle, Ashley Cowper, with whose daughter Theodora he falls in love, and addresses to

her many of his early poems under the name of "Delia;" he takes chambers in the Middle Temple in 1752, and is called to the bar in 1754, but never practices, having studied law merely to please his father; he gives his time to literature, and becomes a member of the "Nonsense Club," a group of seven Westminster men interested in literature and journalism, among whom were Bonnell Thornton, Coleman, and Lloyd; he associates also with Churchill, Wilkes, and Hogarth; he is refused the hand of his cousin by her father, though she remains single and faithful to Cowper till her death; he loses his father in 1752, but is not much affected by the loss; he receives a small patrimony from his father; he secures a position as Commissioner of Bankrupts, which brings him £60 per annum, and, in 1759, removes to the Inner Temple; through the influence of his cousin, Major Cowper, Cowper is offered first the office of Reading Clerk and Clerk of Committees in the House of Lords and then that of Clerk of the Journals; Cowper accepts both, successively, and fails to appear in each case because of diffidence as to reading in public and fear of inability to pass the examination required for the second position; he becomes exceedingly nervous and a victim to hypochondria; he convinces himself that suicide is lawful, and makes preparations to take his life several times, but shrinks at the last moment; he finally tries to hang himself, and is apparently prevented only by the breaking of the garter that he has used for a noose; he is seized with religious horrors, and becomes so completely insane that he is placed, in 1763, in the private asylum of one Dr. Cotton, at St. Albans; after remaining eighteen months in the asylum, Cowper is discharged, having been restored, as he believed, through divine faith; he celebrates his deliverance in the poem "The Happy Change;" he is assisted financially by friends, and goes, in 1765, to reside in Huntingdon, where he meets Mrs. Unwin, the "Mary" of his poems; he maintains a servant and an outcast boy, both



brought with him from St. Albans; he takes up his residence with the Unwins, who care for him tenderly; after Mr. Unwin's death, in 1767, he goes with Mrs. Unwin to reside at Olney, where Cowper comes under the influence of the Rev. John Newton; the religious life of Cowper and the Unwins is so strict and regular that they are called "Methodists;" Cowper and Mrs. Unwin become near neighbors to Newton, and enter on "a decided course of religious happiness;" at Newton's suggestion Cowper begins the "Olney Hymns;" under the ascetic life recommended by Newton, aggravated by the death of his brother, Cowper becomes again insane in 1773, fancies himself rejected of Heaven, etc., and is slowly nursed back to reason by Mrs. Unwin; he begins to domesticate hares, and, at Mrs. Unwin's suggestion, in 1780, begins to write poetry, as furnishing congenial occupation for his mind; Mrs. Unwin suggests the theme "The Progress of Error," and within the year Cowper writes the poem of that title together with "Truth," "Table-Talk," and "Exposition;" in 1781 he meets Lady Austen, who suggests to him the composition of "The Task," which Cowper begins in 1783 and publishes in 1785; "The Task" is successful and wins public recognition; after completing "The Task" he writes "The Loss of the Royal George," "The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk," "The Poplar Field," "The Shrubbery," "The Needless Alarm," etc.; in 1784, at Lady Austen's suggestion, Cowper begins his translation of Homer, which he publishes in 1791; he hears the story of "John Gilpin" from Lady Austen while winding her thread, and writes the ballad at a single sitting; he becomes estranged from Lady Austen in 1785 through her dislike of a certain "lecture" in one of Cowper's letters; he becomes again insane in 1791 and again attempts suicide; Lady Austen's place is supplied by Cowper's cousin, Lady Hesketh; Cowper's health becomes shattered by recourse to medical empiricism; he removes, in 1786, with Mrs. Unwin, to Wes-

ton; Mrs. Unwin's faculties become affected, and both are received into the home of the poet Hayley at Earham; they soon return to Weston, where Cowper becomes again insane and again attempts suicide; Hayley and other friends remove them to Mundsley, in Norfolk, thence to Dunham Lodge, near Swaffham, and finally to East Dereham, where Mrs. Unwin dies in 1799; soon afterward Cowper recovers his faculties sufficiently to write "The Castaway," then sinks into a state of utter dejection, and dies at East Dereham, April 27, 1800.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

**1. Minute Descriptive Power.**—"It is these indoor scenes, this common world, this 'gentle round of calm delights,' the petty detail of quiet relaxation, that Cowper excels in. The post-boy, the winter's evening, the newspaper, the knitting needles, the stockings, these are his subjects. These sketches have the highest merit, suitableness of style."  
—*Walter Bagehot*.

"The pleasures of the country and of home, the walk, the garden, but above all the 'intimate delights' of the winter evening, the snug parlor, with its close-drawn curtains shutting out the stormy night, the steaming and bubbling teapurn, the cheerful circle, the book read aloud, the newspaper, through which we look out into the unquiet world, are painted by the writer with a heartfelt enjoyment which infects the reader."—*Goldwin Smith*.

"The very foundation of his poetry is his close observation of men and things; the close observation that fills his letters with happily touched incidents of village life, with characters sketched in a sentence, furnishes the groundwork of 'The Task' and the Satires. The snow-covered fields, the wagon toiling through the drifts, the distant plough slow-moving, the garden, the fireside, the gypsies, the village thief, the clerical coxcomb, of all these he gives not only finished pictures but pictures finished in the presence of the object and not in the studio."—*T. H. Ward*.

"Cowper possessed in a high degree the art of noting particular traits and curious details of things; he was almost minutely exact. . . . In his 'Winter Walk at Noon' he produced an exquisitely painted picture and one that was finished, living, and natural."—*Sainte-Beuve*.

"Impressions small to us were great to him; and in a room, a garden, he found the world. . . . He discovers a beauty and harmony in the coals of a sparkling fire, in the movement of fingers over a piece of wool-work. . . . Nature is to him like a gallery of splendid and various pictures, which to us ordinary folk are always covered up with cloths. Such is the new truth which Cowper's poems brought to light. . . . We may find poetry, if we wish, at our fireside and among the beds of our kitchen garden."—*Taine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Now roves the eye,  
 And, posted on this speculative height,  
 Exults in its command. The sheepfold here  
 Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.  
 At first, progressive as a stream, they seek  
 The middle field ; but, scatter'd by degrees,  
 Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.  
 There from the sun-burnt hayfield homeward creeps  
 The loaded wain ; while, lighten'd of its charge,  
 The wain that meets it passes swiftly by,  
 The boorish driver leaning o'er his team,  
 Vociferous, impatient of delay.  
 Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,  
 Diversified with trees of every growth,  
 Alike yet various. Here the gray, smooth trunks  
 Of ash or lime or beech distinctly shine  
 Within the twilight of their distant shades ;  
 There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood  
 Seems sunk and shorten'd to its topmost boughs."  
— *The Task.*

" Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
 Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
 And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn  
 Throws up a steamy column, and the cups  
 That cheer but not inebriate wait on each,  
 So let us welcome peaceful evening in.  
 . . . . .  
 But here the needle plies its busy task,  
 The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
 Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
 Unfolds its bosom ; buds and leaves and sprigs  
 And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,  
 Follow the nimble fingers of the fair ;  
 A wreath that cannot fade, of flowers that blow  
 With most success when all besides decay."— *The Task.*

"The verdure of the plain lies buried deep  
 Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents  
 And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,  
 Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine  
 Conspicuous and in bright apparel clad,  
 And, fledged with icy feathers, nod superb.  
 The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence  
 Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep  
 In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait  
 Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man  
 Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,  
 And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.  
 He from the stack carves out the accustom'd load,  
 Deep plunging and again deep plunging oft  
 His broad keen knife into the solid mass."—*The Task*.

✓ **2. Shyness — Fondness for Seclusion.** — Jeffrey speaks of "that extraordinary combination of shyness and ambition to which we are probably indebted for the very existence of Cowper's poetry." "Poor wounded bird," exclaims Sainte-Beuve, "he sought to crouch unseen in his corner, to recover his strength little by little, to cure himself of his wound in secrecy and assuage his long and poignant terrors. . . . In the ever-recurring motive and theme of the blessedness of home he is inexhaustible. Macaulay calls Cowper "the gentle, shy, melancholy Calvinist, whose spirit had been broken by fagging at school," and Dawson speaks of "the holy shades and quiet ways and pleasant places where Cowper, witty, wise, godly, and true, delighted to walk."

"But little society disturbed that sequestered life; few were the men and fewer the women whom he met; he companied with sheep and birds, with his hares and his spaniel, till he grew to know them as friends."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"No stricken deer that ever left the herd of men required a solace more. . . . He speaks from the contemplative air of rural retirement. He went thither to muse on the per-

ishing pleasures of life. His disposition was of that retiring kind that shrinks from the world, and is free and at ease only in seclusion. To exhibit himself, he tells us, was 'mortal poison.' . . . He desired no nearer view of the world than he could gain from the newspaper ; or through the loopholes of retreat to see the stir of the great Babel and not feel the crowd. . . . Such beings find their chief happiness in the privacy of a home. . . . They turn aside from the idols of fashion to worship their household gods. The fire-side, the accustomed window, the familiar garden, bound their desires."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"Cowper's work, in the main, has only the sluggish vitality of this life. . . . A vision of quiet green fields, inhabited by respectable gentlefolk, who led an existence of humble routine, made up Cowper's world."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"He seldom launches out into general descriptions of nature ; he looks at her over his clipped hedges and from his well-swept garden walks ; or if he makes a bolder experiment now and then, it is with an air of precaution. . . . He is delicate to fastidiousness, and is glad to get back, after a romantic adventure with crazy Kate, a party of gypsies, or a little child on a common, to the drawing-room and the ladies again, to the sofa and the tea-kettle."—*William Hazlitt*.

"Cowper said, substantially, 'Leave the world,' as Rousseau said, 'Upset the world.' Limited within a narrow circle of ideas, and living in a society where the great issues of the times were not represented in so naked a form, Cowper's influence ran in a more confined channel."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Although he was neither husband nor father, Cowper was the poet of the family ; he was the poet of the home, of a well-ordered, pure, gently animated interior, of the grove we see at the bottom of the garden, of the chimney corner."—*Sainte-Beuve*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Oh blest seclusion from a jarring world  
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys ! Retreat  
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore  
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past ;  
But it has peace, and much secures the mind  
From all assaults of evil, proving still  
A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with ease  
By vicious custom, raging uncontrolled  
Abroad and desolating public life.  
Had I the choice of sublunary good,  
What could I wish that I possess not here ?  
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace.”  
—*The Task.*

“ Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,  
Though long rebell'd against, not yet suppress'd,  
And calls a creature form'd for God alone,  
For Heaven's high purposes and not his own,  
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,  
From what debilitates and what inflames,  
From cities humming with a restless crowd,  
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,  
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,  
The dupes of pleasure or the slaves of gain ;  
Where works of man are clustered close around,  
And works of God are hardly to be found,  
To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,  
Traces of Eden are still seen below,  
Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,  
Remind him of his Maker's power and love.”  
—*Retirement.*

“ Votaries of business and of pleasure prove  
Faithless alike in friendship and in love.  
Retired from all the circles of the gay  
And all the crowds that bustle life away,  
To scenes where competition, envy, strife,  
Beget no thunder-clouds to trouble life—



Let me, the charge of some good angel, find  
 One who has known and has escaped mankind;  
 Polite yet virtuous, who has brought away  
 The manners, not the morals, of the day:  
 With him, perhaps with her (for men have known  
 No firmer friendships than the fair have shown),  
 Let me enjoy, in some unthought-of spot,  
 All former friends forgiven and forgot,  
 Down to the close of life's fast fading scene,  
 Union of hearts without a flaw between."

— *Valediction.*

✓ 3. **Gloominess.**—"The only passion that ever moved him was the morbid passion of despair, when the cloud that obscured his brain pressed heavy upon him; and it was only when he wrote under this influence that he produced master-pieces, such as that noble and terrible poem, 'The Castaway' and the lines of self-description in 'The Task.'"—*T. H. Ward.*

"Unfortunately, the only record of his boyhood is the sombre account of it given by himself in after years, when the disposition to increase all the darker shades in his unregenerate days was strong upon him."—*Mrs. Oliphant.*

"The impression always remained by him, or rather the belief, that he had forfeited God's mercy and shut himself out from hope and heaven by not executing the will of Jehovah when it was made known to him and the appointed opportunity had come. By letting that opportunity pass he thought he had brought upon himself perpetual exclusion from God's favor. For a long time he thought that even to implore mercy would be opposing the determinate counsel of God. . . . He thought himself shut out, by a particular edict, from God's mercy, excluded from Heaven, and doomed to destruction. He thought that for him there was no access to the mercy-seat, and that he had no right to pray."—*G. B. Cheever.*

"His whole life was a long sadness. . . . Despair grew upon him apace, and he came to the settled opinion, which never left him, that he was a doomed, damned man, one who had committed an irreparable sin, and for whom there was no redemption forevermore. . . . The last five years of his life were passed in perpetual gloom. During these five years he is said never to have smiled. . . . His life was a perpetual want."—*George Dawson*.

"Cowper was profoundly Christian; from the point of view of proportion and taste, he was too much governed by austerity. He had a side almost Hebraic in its severity and terror . . . and at the same time he sometimes had suddenly a sight, a vision, of Sinai."—*Sainte-Beuve*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Obscurest night involved the sky,  
The Atlantic billows roared,  
When such a destined wretch as I,  
Wash'd headlong from on board,  
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,  
His floating home forever left.

. . . . .  
I therefore purpose not or dream,  
Descanting on his fate,  
To give the melancholy theme  
A more enduring date :  
But misery still delights to trace  
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,  
No light propitious shone ;  
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,  
We perish'd, each alone :  
But I beneath a rougher sea,  
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he."

— *The Castaway*.

"The Lord will happiness divine  
 On contrite hearts bestow ;  
 Then tell me, gracious God, is mine  
 A contrite heart or no ?

I sometimes think myself inclined  
 To love thee, if I could ;  
 But often feel another mind,  
 Averse to all that's good.

My best desires are faint and few—  
 I fain would strive for more :  
 But when I cry, ' My strength renew !'  
 Seem weaker than before.

Thy saints are comforted, I know,  
 And love thy house of prayer ;  
 I therefore go where others go,  
 But find no comfort there."

—*The Contrite Heart.*

"Oh, happy shades! to me unblest,  
 Friendly to peace but not to me ;  
 How ill the scene that offers rest  
 And heart that cannot rest, agree !

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,  
 Those alders quivering to the breeze,  
 Might soothe a soul less hurt than mine  
 And please, if anything could please.

But fix'd unalterable Care  
 Forgoes not what she feels within,  
 Shows the same sadness everywhere,  
 And slights the season and the scene."

—*The Shrubby.*

4. **Love of Nature.**—Cowper was the harbinger of new and better things in English poetry. It has been truly said that "he, first of English poets, brought men back from the town to the country."

"We read Cowper, not for his passion or for his ideas, but for his love of nature and his faithful rendering of her beauty. . . . [Cowper teaches us that] God made the country, and man made the town. True beauty is to be found only in unadulterate nature; true pleasure only in the fields and woods and in the simple offices of rural and domestic life. To watch nature at her work; to meditate; to cultivate sympathy with those creatures most fresh from nature's hand—with animals and the poor and friends of your home—this [in Cowper's judgment] is the only way to rational happiness."—*T. H. Ward.*

"God wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic  
senses  
As hills have language for, and stars harmonious influences.  
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number;  
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a  
slumber."—*Mrs. Browning.*

"Springtime almost intoxicates him. . . . There is something of the squirrel in the gaiety with which it inspires him. . . . Cowper loved the country dearly; he loved it to live in, to dwell in, and did not grow weary of it at any age or at any season."—*Sainte-Beuve.*

"His love of nature is at once of a narrower and sincerer kind than that which Rousseau made fashionable. He has no tendency to the misanthropic or cynical view which induces men of morbid or affected minds to profess a love of savage scenery simply because it is savage. Neither does he rise to the more philosophical view, which sees in the seas and the mountains the most striking symbols of the great forces of the universe. Nature is to him a collection of baubles soon to be taken away, and he seeks in its contemplation temporary relief from anguish."—*Leslie Stephen.*

"It was with an eye and heart thus blissfully enlightened that Cowper had been taught to look upon nature; and inas-

much as he has told us that, both in his delineations of nature and of the human heart, he had drawn all from experience, . . . the poet that could write, out of his own experience, 'The Winter Morning Walk' and 'The Winter Walk at Noon,' must himself have been the happy man, appropriating nature as his Father's work—must himself have felt the dear filial relationship, the assurance of a Father's love and of a child's inheritance in heaven."—*G. B. Cheever*.

"His sense of beauty was practically confined to landscape and small animals. . . . His poems on birds and flowers are pretty conceits, but at the present day remind us a little of the nursery."—*G. E. Woodbury*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,  
And that my raptures are not conjured up  
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,  
But genuine. . . ."

"The achievements of art may amuse,  
May even our wonder excite;  
But groves, hills, and valleys diffuse  
A lasting, a sacred delight."

"O Nature, whose Elysian scenes disclose  
His bright perfections at whose will they rose,  
Next to the power that formed thee and sustains  
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains."

"Lovely, indeed, the mimic works of art,  
But nature's works far lovelier. I admire,  
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,  
Who shows me that which I shall never see :

But imitative strokes can do no more  
Than please the eye—sweet Nature every sense;  
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,  
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales

And music of her woods—no works of man  
 May rival these ; these all bespeak a power  
 Peculiar and exclusively her own.  
 Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;  
 'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed ;  
 Who scorns it, starves deservedly at home."—*The Task.*

" Oh Winter ! ruler of the inverted year,  
 Thy scatter'd hair with sleet like ashes fill'd,  
 Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
 Fringed with beard made white with other snows  
 Than those of age, thy forehead wrapp'd in clouds,  
 A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne  
 A sliding car indebted to no wheels,  
 But urged by storms along its slippery way ;  
 I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st  
 And dreaded as thou art !"—*The Task.*

" The night was winter in its roughest mood ;  
 The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon  
 Upon the southern side of the slant hills,  
 And where the woods fence off the northern blasts,  
 The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
 And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue  
 Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
 The dazzling splendor of the scene below.  
 Again the harmony comes o'er the vale ;  
 And through the trees I view the embattled tower  
 Whence all the music. I again perceive  
 The soothing influence of the wafted strains,  
 And settle in soft musings as I tread  
 The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,  
 Whose outspread branches overarch the glade."

—*The Task.*

✓ 5. **Theoretical Satire.**—Critical opinion concerning Cowper's satire is as diverse as it is concerning Thackeray's. It is theoretical in that it is directed against sins real and imaginary, of which Cowper had no personal experience or observation, and because he was disposed to except from his

broad censure almost every specific case that happened to come within his notice.

"Society was to him an abstraction, on which he discoursed like a pulpiteer. His satiric whip not only has no lash, it is brandished in the air. No man was ever less qualified for the office of a censor; his judgment is at once disarmed, and a breach in his principles is at once made by the slightest personal influence. Bishops are bad: but the bishop whose brother Cowper knows is a blessing to the church. Bitter lines against Popery [the original lines 390 to 413 of the poem entitled 'Consolation'] were struck out because the writer had made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, who were Roman Catholics. In all his social judgments, Cowper is at a wrong point of view. He is always deluded by the idol of his care. He writes perpetually on the assumption that a life of retirement is more favorable to virtue than a life of action."—*Goldwin Smith*.

"Cowper knew but little of the world, and he became its censor because he was so ignorant. He prided himself upon being of it but not in it and looking upon it through his retreat. It is not strange, then, that much of his satire lacks point."—*T. H. Ward*.

"As a scold we think Cowper failed. He had a great idea of the use of railing, and there are many pages of laudable invective against various vices, which we feel no call whatever to defend. But a great vituperator had need to be a great hater; and of any real rage, any such gall and bitterness as great and irritable satirists have in other ages let loose upon men, he was as incapable as a tame hare."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"The most effective satirist is the man who has escaped with labor and pain, and not without some grievous stains, from the slough in which others are mired. . . . Separated by a retirement of twenty years from a world with which he had never been very familiar, and at which he only peeped through the loop-holes of retreat, his satire wanted

the brilliancy, the quickness of illustration from actual life, which alone makes satire readable."—*Leslie Stephen*.

So much for the opinions of three eminent critics ; that some commentators have seen Cowper's whip brandished elsewhere than "in air," is evident from the following estimates :

" His satire is excellent. It is pointed and forcible, with the polished manners of the gentleman and the indignation of the virtuous man."—*William Hazlitt*.

" Few writers are more unsparing of the lash than the shrinkingly sensitive Cowper. It may be that he does not lay it on with the sense of personal power and indignant paying off of old scores which one finds in a Juvenal or a Pope ; but the conviction that he is the mouthpiece of Providence, and that, when William Cowper has pronounced a man reprobate, the smoke of his burning is sure to ascend up forever and ever, stands instead of much, and lends unction to the hallowed strain. . . . His narrow, exclusive, severe, and arbitrary religious creed—a creed which made him as sure that other people were wicked and marked out for damnation as that himself was elected and saved—this creed speaks out in his poems in unmistakable tones of harsh judgment and unqualified denunciation."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

" The recluse in an out-of-the-way village set himself the task of becoming a Christian Juvenal."—*J. R. Greene*.

" In his satire Cowper touches, not with savage bitterness, but with a gentleness which healed while it lashed : He saw cities and their evils through the exaggeration of distance and in that glare of morality in which sin is so magnified that the good which balances it is lost. He saw the curse which rested on man and nothing else when he looked upon the city. Cowper had the penetrating irony belonging to timid and sorrowful natures, endowed with very delicate organs, which are doubtless shocked by the bluntness and coarseness around."—*Stopford Brooke*.



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,  
 Lascivious, headstrong, or all these at once ;  
 That in good time the stripling's finished taste  
 For loose expense and fashionable waste  
 Should prove your ruin and his own at last ;  
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,  
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,  
 Else of a mannish growth, and, five in ten,  
 In infidelity and lewdness, men.  
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,  
 That authors are most useful pawn'd or sold ;  
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,  
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart ;  
 There waiter Dick, with bacchanalian lays,  
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,  
 His counsellor and bosom-friend shall prove,  
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love."

—*Tirocinium.*

"But loose in morals and in manners vain,  
 In conversation frivolous, in dress  
 Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse ;  
 Frequent in park, with lady at his side,  
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes ;  
 But rare at home, and never at his books  
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;  
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round  
 Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;  
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,  
 And well prepared by ignorance and sloth,  
 By infidelity and love of the world,  
 To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave  
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride—  
 From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,  
 Preserve the Church ! and lay not careless hands  
 On skulls that cannot teach and will not learn."

—*The Task.*

"How shall I speak thee or thy power address,  
 Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?  
 By thee religion, liberty, and laws  
 Exert their influence and advance their cause ;  
 By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell,  
 Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell ;  
 Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise ;  
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies ;  
 Like Eden's dead probationary tree,  
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee ! "

—*The Progress of Error.*

**6. Patriotism.**—"Cowper is a patriot and a true Englishman, even inclusive of prejudice and bias. In order to read him as he ought to be read and to understand thoroughly all his chief points, . . . it is necessary to recollect the events of those years—the American War, the stormy debates in Parliament, etc., etc."—*Sainte-Beuve.*

"He derived his patriotism, and drew the passion with which he informed it, from the connection of his country with God. It was God who was king of England and was educating the nation ; and this conception bound all citizens in the mutual love of one another and the whole. . . . It is not a note of mere lyric interest in Britain's glory on the seas, like Thomson's 'Rule Britannia ;' . . . it is a note that thrills with emotion for England as God's nation and having a work to do for man. We already breathe the air of the patriotic poetry of Wordsworth."—*Stopford Brooke.*

"His love of country was absolute. He says :  
 'I never framed a wish or formed a plan  
 That flattered me with hope of earthly bliss,  
 But *there* I laid the scene.' "—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"Now and then, in reading 'The Task,' we come across a dash of warlike patriotism which, amidst the general philan-

thropy, surprises and offends the reader's palate like garlic in our butter."—*Goldwin Smith*.

"Cowper, by virtue of his family traditions, was in theory a sound Whig. . . . He rises into a warmth on behalf of liberty for which he thinks it right to make a simple-minded apology in a note."—*Leslie Stephen*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—  
My country ! and while yet a nook is left  
Where English minds and manners may be found,  
Shall be constrain'd to love thee. Though thy clime  
Be fickle and thy year most part deform'd  
With dripping rains, or wither'd by a frost—  
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies  
And fields without a flower for warmer France  
With all her vines ; nor for Ausonia's groves  
Of golden fruitage and her myrtle bowers.  
To shake thy senate and from heights sublime  
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task :  
But I can feel thy fortunes and partake  
Thy joys and sorrows with as true a heart."—*The Task*.

"Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd,  
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest ;  
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,  
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.  
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,  
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm ;  
While his own heaven surveys the troubled scene,  
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.  
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,  
Pours out a flood of splendor upon thine ;  
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays  
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days."

—*Expostulation*.

“ ‘Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs  
 Receive our air, that moment they are free ;  
 They touch our country and their shackles fall.’  
 That’s noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
 And let it circulate through every vein  
 Of all your empire ; that where Britain’s power  
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.”—*The Task*.

**7. Sportiveness — Fantastic Humor.** — Cowper’s humor is *sui generis*, for the reason that, excepting perhaps the humor of Lamb, Cowper’s is due to a different influence from that which generally gives rise to this element of style. As Woodberry truly says, “He played only to escape his terror, and at last failed even in that.”

“It has been objected to Hamlet that the sportiveness of the prince mars the effect of his thoughtfulness. But it is natural, when the mind is haunted and oppressed by any painful idea which it is necessary to conceal, to seek relief and at the same time increase the deception by a kind of playfulness. This is exemplified in Cowper’s letters. . . . He reared his airy structures to keep his mind from being swept away by a gloomy current. To this end he surrendered himself to the most obvious pleasantry at hand. . . . Cowper speculates on balloons with the charming playfulness that marks the correspondence of a lively girl.”—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

“His playful humor—call it rather wit—was at all times prepared to construct out of the slenderest materials an amusing incident. So ready and so graceful, in fact, was the poet’s fancy that he knew how to make an amusing story out of nothing.”—*Higgins (an old Neighbor)*.

Speaking of the well-known story of the suggestion of the theme of “John Gilpin,” Cowper’s humorous masterpiece, Southey says: “Lady Austen’s conversation had as happy an effect on the melancholy spirit of Cowper as the harp of David had upon Saul.”

“When Cowper was in good spirits his joy, intensified by insensibility and past suffering, played like a fountain of light over all the incidents of his quiet life. An ink-glass . . . a halibut served up for dinner, a cat shut up in a drawer, sufficed to elicit a little jet of poetical delight, the highest and brightest jet of all being ‘John Gilpin.’” —*Goldwin Smith.*

“He trifles because he is driven to it by necessity. His most ludicrous verses have been written in his saddest moods.” —*Leslie Stephen.*

Cowper confirms Stephen’s statement; for he once declared, “The most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood.”

#### ILLUSTRATION.

“Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;  
 Away went hat and wig;  
 He little dreamt, when he set out,  
 Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,  
 Like streamer long and gay,  
 Till loop and button failing both,  
 At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern  
 The bottles he had slung;  
 A bottle swinging at each side,  
 As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream’d,  
 Up flew the windows all;  
 And every soul cried out, ‘Well done!’  
 As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?  
 His fame soon spread around;  
 ‘He carries weight!’ ‘he rides a race!’  
 ‘Tis for a thousand pounds!’

And still as fast as he drew near,  
 'Twas wonderful to view  
 How in a trice the turnpike men,  
 Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down  
 His reeking head full low,  
 The bottles twain behind his back  
 Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,  
 Most piteous to be seen,  
 Which made his horse's flanks to smoke  
 As they had basted been.

But still he seem'd to carry weight,  
 With leathern girdle braced ;  
 For all might see the bottle-necks  
 Still dangling at his waist."—*John Gilpin's Ride.*

**8. Sensitive Tenderness—Sympathy.**—Woodberry calls Cowper "The companionable, soft-hearted, pathetic man, whose pastimes, whether in gardening or poetry or in caring for his pets, were a refuge from the most poignant anguish ;" and Cowper wrote as a part of his own epitaph,

" His highest powers to the heart belong,  
 His virtue formed the magic of his song "

" Apart from his religion, Cowper was eminently human and gentle-hearted ; the interest which he took in his tame hares will perhaps be remembered when much of his wielding of the divine thunderbolts against the profane shall have been forgotten."—*W. M. Rossetti.*

" He had too delicate and too pure a heart. . . .  
 Poor charming soul, pinched like a frail flower transplanted

from a warm land to the snow ; the world's temperature was too rough for it, and the moral law which should have supported it tore it with its thorns."—*Taine*.

"The feminine delicacy and purity of Cowper's manners and disposition, . . . the singular gentleness and modesty of his whole character, . . . make us indulgent to his weaknesses and more delighted with his excellencies than if he had been the centre of a circle of wits or the ornament of a literary confederacy."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"The sonnet to Mary is so perfect in its beauty that it could not but be universally admired ; but the lines to the memory of his mother go down as deep into other hearts as the love that inspired them in the depths of his own. . . . The unequalled tenderness and pathos of this poem, and the universal experience of the sweetness and preciousness of a mother's love by which all hearts answer to its exquisite touches, have rendered it the best appreciated and admired of all Cowper's productions."—*G. B. Cheever*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"My mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?  
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?  
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss ;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah, that maternal smile ! it answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And turning from my nursery window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !  
But was it such ?—It was. Where thou art gone  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more !"

—*On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture.*

" But ah ! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,  
 From merchants rich in cargoes of despair,  
 Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span  
 And buy the muscles and the bones of man ?  
 The tender ties of father, husband, friend,  
 All bonds of nature in that moment end ;  
 And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,  
 A stroke as fatal as the scythe of Death.  
 The sable warrior, frantic with regret  
 Of her he loves, and never can forget,  
 Loses in tears the far-receding shore,  
 But not the thought that they must meet no more ;  
 Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,  
 What has he left that he can yet forego ? "—*Charity*.

" Thy indistinct expressions seem  
 Like language utter'd in a dream ;  
 Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,  
 My Mary !

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,  
 Are still more lovely in my sight  
 Than golden beams of orient light,  
 My Mary !

For, could I view nor them nor thee,  
 What sight worth seeing could I see ?  
 The sun would rise in vain for me,  
 My Mary !

Partakers of thy sad decline,  
 Thy hands their little force resign ;  
 Yet gently press'd, press gently mine.  
 My Mary ! "

—*To Mary (Mrs. Unwin)*.

### 9. Unconventional Morality — Didacticism.—

" Verse was deliberately adopted by Cowper at a mature age  
 as a means of usefulness. . . . He became a lay-preacher



in numbers. His object was to improve men, not like the bard of Avon by powerfully unfolding their passions, nor like Pope by pure satire, but rather through the quiet teachings of the moralist."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"He says over and over again—and his entire sincerity lifts him above all suspicion of the affected self—that he looked upon his poetical works as at best innocent triflings except so far as his poems were versified sermons. His intention was everywhere didactic, and his highest ambition was to be a useful auxiliary to the prosaic exhortations of Doddridge, Watts, or his friend Newton."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"A genuine desire to make society better is always present in his poems."—*Goldwin Smith*.

"In the morality of his poems Cowper is honorably distinguished from most of his brethren. Our poets have too often deviated into an incorrect system of morals, coldly delivered; a smothered, polished, filed down Christianity; a medium system between the religion of the Gospel and the heathen philosophy, and intended, apparently, to accommodate the two. In Cowper all is reality; there is no doubt, no vagueness of opinion; the only satisfactory object on which our affections can be fixed is distinctly and fully pointed out. A perfect line is drawn between truth and error. The heart is enlisted on the side of religion; every precept is just, every motive efficacious. Sensible that every vice is connected with the rest—that the voluptuous will become hard-hearted, and the unthinking licentious—he aims his shafts at all; and as Gospel truth is the base of morality, so is it the ground-work of his precepts."—*Quarterly Review*, Vol. 16.

"He took his part in that great work which Samuel Johnson helped to do, and that was to make morality fashionable. He had been in the world long enough to get polished; he went out of it early enough to be pure and unsophisticated."—*George Dawson*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,  
There dwells a consciousness in every breast  
That folly ends where genuine hope begins,  
And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.  
Nature opposes, with her utmost force,  
This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce ;  
And while Religion seems to be her view,  
Hates with a deep sincerity the true :  
For this, of all that ever influenced man,  
Since Abel worshipp'd or the world began,  
This only spares no lust, admits no plea,  
But makes him, if at all, completely free ;  
Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,  
Of an eternal, universal war ;  
Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,  
Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles ;  
Drives through the realms of Sin where Riot reels,  
And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels.”  
—*Hope.*

“ Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurr'd  
His anger who can waste thee with a word,  
Who poises and proportions sea and land,  
Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,  
And in whose awful sight all nations seem  
As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream ?  
Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)  
Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars ?  
Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem  
Of his just praise to lavish it on them ?  
Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told,  
A truth still sacred and believed of old,  
That no success attends on spears and swords  
Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's ? ”

—*Expostulation.*

" Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
 And make mistakes for manhood to reform.  
 Boys are, at best, but pretty buds unblown,  
 Whose scent and hues are rather guess'd than known.  
 Each dreams that each is just what he appears,  
 But learns his error in maturer years,  
 When disposition, like a sail unfurl'd,  
 Shows all its rents and patches to the world.  
 If, therefore, even when honest in design,  
 A boyish friendship may so soon decline,  
 'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart  
 With just abhorrence for so mean a part  
 Than set your son to work at a vile trade  
 For wages so unlikely to be paid."—*Tirocinium*.

✓ 10. **Piety — Cheerful Submissiveness.** — Macaulay says that religion was the muse of Cowper. Hayley, in his famous epitaph on Cowper, calls him "Devotion's bard, devoutly just," and Tuckerman calls him, "A soul gratefully recognizing the benignity of God, in the fresh verdure of the myrtle and the mutual attachment of doves, and yet incredulous of his care for his own eternal destiny."

Cowper once wrote to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, "I know, and have experience of it every day, that the mercy of God, to him who believes himself the object of it, is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of every other blessing."

" 'Unassisted by the hope of divine favor !' This makes the continual development of Cowper's piety most wonderful. Here was the bush burning but not consumed. Here was the faith of submission, reverence, love, glorifying God in the fires as truly as was ever manifested in the fiery furnace."—*G. B. Cheever*.

"His life was as blameless as the water lilies which he loved. . . . Whatever we may think of his religion or the manner of it, there is no doubt that it indefinitely extended his poetic sympathy, and that in this extension of sympathy we find ourselves in another world altogether than

that of Dryden, Pope, or Gray. . . . In Cowper the poetry of human wrong begins that long, long cry against oppression and evil done by man to man, . . . which rings louder and louder through Burns, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron. . . . Cowper carried this poetry of human wrong into the prisons with Howard and into the cottages and lives of the poor. . . . But here Cowper could not stop. He saw a higher liberty than any on earth, a liberty without which political liberty was in vain, with which even the slave felt free; the liberty of heart derived from heaven. Cowper struck the first note of revolutionary poetry. He struck it in connection with God. . . . His tenderness for the weak and poor and wronged is as sweet as his hatred of oppression is strong. . . . Cowper's poetry was drenched with theology. . . . His religion led him to trace all moral guilt and folly to the world's rejection of Christ. . . . He looked abroad and saw all men related to God, it mattered not of what nation, caste, or color. . . . The range of his interest was as wide as human life, and as he sketched he saw as the one ideal and the one remedy for all—the cross of Christ.”—*Stopford Brooke*.

“He has a moral and religious sentiment that never abandons him—a gleam of St. Paul and the apostles, with the appreciation of a comfort and well-being that the apostles never knew.”—*Sainte-Beuve*.

“One very great task which Cowper accomplished was to teach men of taste that men of piety are not necessarily dullards and fools, and to teach men of piety that they need not be coarse and vulgar. . . . He did this country an essential service, which almost all the poets have been better for. Since Cowper's days the greatest poets have been on the side of the angels—men as timorous about wrong-doing as they are glorious in the praise of right. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Tennyson are in a direct line from Cowper.

. . . It is a comfort to find a poet so pious as Cowper and not a 'muff.' "—*George Dawson*.

"It is not for himself that he rejoices only, but he feels in his glowing heart the gladness and coming glory of the whole universe. . . . The writings of Cowper testify everywhere to that grand sermon which is eternally preaching in the open air—that gospel of the field and forest, which, like the gospel of Christ, is the voice of that love that overflows the universe; which puts down all sectarian bitterness in him who listens to it; which, being perfect, 'casts out all fear;' against which the gloom of bigots and the terrors of fanatics cannot stand. . . . Despairing even of God's mercy and of salvation, his religious poetry is of the most cheerful and triumphantly glad kind.

'His soul exults, hope animates his lays.  
The sense of mercy kindles into praise.'

Filled with this joyful assurance, wherever he turns his eyes on the magnificent spectacle of creation, he finds themes of noble gratulation."—*William Howitt*.

"The career of Cowper was one to fill the pessimist with perennial gladness. . . . It might seem that nothing short of malignity in the overruling powers could account for the fiat that gave up so pure, simple, and cordial a nature to be the prey of seven devils. . . . In 1766 every day the time from breakfast till 11 A.M. was spent [by Cowper] in reading the Bible or sermons or in religious conversation; the hour from eleven to twelve was passed in church at service; in the afternoon there was a second period of religious conversation or hymn singing; at night there was commonly another sermon and more psalms, and after that family prayers. . . . This substitution of dogma for intuition made religion . . . not a life but a disease. . . . His letters are the effort of a creed-believing mind to get rid of itself."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"He belongs emphatically to Christianity. . . . If the shield which, for eighteen centuries, Christ, by his teaching and his death, has spread over the weak things of this world should fail, and might should again become the title to existence and the measure of worth, Cowper will be cast aside as a specimen of despicable inferiority."—*Goldwin Smith*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"O Lord, my best desire fulfil,  
And help me to resign  
Life, health, and comfort to thy will  
And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,  
Whose love forbids my fears?  
Or tremble at the gracious hand  
That wipes away my tears?

No, let me rather freely yield  
What most I prize to Thee;  
Who never hast a good withheld,  
Or wilt withhold from me."—*Submission*.

"Nor do we madly, like an impious world,  
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God  
That made them an intruder on their joys,  
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise  
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,  
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,  
That calls the past to our exact review,  
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,  
The disappointed foe, deliverance found  
Unlook'd for, life preserved and peace restored—  
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love."—*The Task*.

Weak and irresolute is man ;  
 The purpose of to-day,  
 Woven with pains into his plan,  
 To-morrow rends away.

. . . . .

Bound on a voyage of awful length  
 And dangers little known,  
 A stranger to superior strength,  
 Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail  
 To reach the distant coast ;  
 The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,  
 Or all the toil is lost."—*Human Frailty*.

✓ **II. Scriptural Allusions.**—As might be expected in a writer of Cowper's peculiar religious habits, he abounds in scriptural references and scriptural language. "Not only," says Leslie Stephen, "is the bulk of his poetry directly religious or devotional, but on publishing 'The Task' he assures Newton that he has admitted none but scriptural images, and has kept as closely as possible to scriptural language ;" Cowper thus gives evidence that this characteristic was conscious and intentional.

"His entire design was to communicate the religious views to which he was then a convert. He fancied that the vehicle of verse might bring many to listen to truths which they would be disinclined to have stated to them in simple prose. And however tedious the recurrence of these theological tenets may be, to the common reader, it is certain that a portion of Cowper's peculiar popularity may be traced to their expression."—*Walter Bagehot*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught  
 Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought. .  
 'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,  
 For us plain folks and all who side with us  
 To build our altar, confident and bold,  
 And say, as stern Elijah said of old,  
 'The strife now stands upon a fair award,  
 If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord ;  
 If he be silent, faith is all a whim,  
 Then Baal is the God, and worship him.' "

—*Conversation.*

"Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,  
 That scorns afflictions mercifully meant ;  
 Those humors, tart as wine upon the fret,  
 Which idleness and weariness beget,  
 These and a thousand plagues that haunt the breast,  
 Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,  
 Divine communion chases, as the day  
 Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.  
 See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,  
 Driven out an exile from the face of Saul ;  
 To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,  
 To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies."—*Retirement.*

"Have we not track'd the felon home, and found  
 His birthplace and his dam ? The country mourns,  
 Mourns because every plague that can infest  
 Society, and that saps and worms the base  
 Of the edifice that Policy has raised,  
 Swarms in all quarters ; meets the eye and ear,  
 And suffocates the breath at every turn.  
 Profusion breeds them ; and the cause itself  
 Of that calamitous mischief has been found—  
 Found, too, where most offensive, in the skirts  
 Of the robed pedagogue ! Else let the arraign'd  
 Stand up unconscious and refute the charge.  
 So, when the Jewish leader stretch'd his arm,



And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,  
 Spawn'd in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,  
 Polluting Egypt : gardens, fields, and plains  
 Were covered with the pest ; the streets were fill'd ;  
 The croaking nuisance lurk'd in every nook ;  
 Nor palaces nor even chambers 'scaped ;  
 And the land stank—so numerous was the fry."

—*The Task.*

## 12. Simplicity — Genuineness — Naturalness. —

"His verses are full of personal emotions, genuinely felt, never altered or disguised."—*Taine.*

"He had preserved in no common measure the innocence of childhood."—*Macaulay.*

"An earnest, tender writer and true poet enough to be true to himself."—*Mrs. Browning.*

"Cowper's virtue was in his simplicity and his genuineness, rare qualities then. . . . His good fortune was in never belonging to the literary set or bowing to the town taste."—*G. E. Woodberry.*

"He delivered English verse from the graveclothes of French drapery, and bade it come forth and live in its own natural manly life. . . . There is the classic slang. I hate it. I heartily wish some one would put Pegasus out of the way. The muses are a set of old frumps, and I heartily wish some one would pension off the whole 'tuneful nine' of them, so that I may never hear of them again. I am weary and sick of Mars and Jove and Helicon and Ilissus and the whole collection of stage properties. When I leave these for 'The Task' it is like walking out of an evening party into the fresh moonlight, under the glorious stars, and talking about them, not finely, but simply, heartily, plainly, truly. I regard Latin verse, Greek verse, and piano-strumming as the three-headed Moloch to which England offers up brains and sense. . . . Cowper wrote English poetry into the English language."—*George Dawson.*

"No English poet has ever excelled Cowper when he writes of the daily human affections. In him, one might almost say, began in English poetry that direct, close, impassioned representation, in the least sensational manner, of such common relations as motherhood, filial piety, friendship, married love, the relation of man to animals—and in him they are made religious. . . . Cowper's treatment of all moral subjects is distinguished from his treatment of his personal religion by an essential manliness of tone. Nowhere in our poetry is there heard a finer scorn of vanity, ambition, meanness; nowhere is truth more nobly exalted or justice more sternly glorified. . . . Cowper talks as naturally of all men as Pope did of one or two classes of men."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"There is something in the sweetness and facility of the diction that diffuses a charm over the whole collection [of Cowper's letters] and communicates an interest that is not often commanded by performances of greater dignity and pretension."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"His observation was remarkably nice and true in certain departments of life. . . . The most truly poetic phases of Cowper's verse are the portions devoted to rural and domestic subjects. Here he was at home and alive to every impression."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.  
The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
With slender notes and more than half suppress'd;  
Pleased with his solitude and flitting light  
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes  
From many a twig the pendant drops of ice  
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.  
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,  
Charms more than silence. Meditation here  
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
May give a useful lesson to the head,  
And Learning wiser grow without his books."—*The Task*.

“ A poet's cat, sedate and grave  
As poet well could wish to have,  
Was much addicted to inquire  
For nooks to which she might retire,  
And where, secure as mouse in chink,  
She might repose, or sit and think.  
I know not where she caught the trick—  
Nature perhaps herself had cast her  
In such a mould philosophique,  
Or else she learn'd it of her master.  
Sometimes ascending, debonair,  
An apple-tree or lofty pear,  
Lodged with convenience in the fork,  
She watch'd the gardener at his work ;  
Sometimes her ease and solace sought  
In an old empty watering-pot :  
There, wanting nothing save a fan,  
To seem some nymph in her sedan  
Apparell'd in exactest sort,  
And ready to be borne to court.”

—*The Retired Cat.*

“ Whence is it that, amazed, I hear  
From yonder wither'd spray,  
This foremost morn of all the year,  
The melody of May ?

And why, since thousands would be proud  
Of such a favor shown,  
Am I selected from the crowd  
To witness it alone ?

Sing'st thou, sweet Philomel, to me  
For that I also long  
Have practised in the groves like thee,  
Though not like thee in song ? ”

—*To the Nightingale.*

## KEATS, 1795-1821

**Biographical Outline.**—John Keats, born October 31, 1795, at Moorfields, London; father a livery-stable employe; the childhood home of Keats is at the stable in Finsbury Circus; the family remove in 1801 to Craven Street, City Road; Keats is put into an excellent school in his eighth year; in April, 1804, his father is killed in an accident, and his mother marries one William Rawlings, a stable-keeper, but is soon separated from him; Keats's mother then retires with her children to her father's home at Edmonton; the maternal grandfather dies in March, 1805, and leaves a fortune of £13,000, which places Keats in easy circumstances during his youth; he attends school at Enfield, where he forms a friendship with Charles Cowden Clark, an usher and a son of the master; as a boy, Keats is "of extraordinary mettle, vivacity, and promise," courageous, high-minded, and generous; after two school years of "fighting and frolic," he begins to study and read voraciously, devouring much literature, criticism, and classical mythology; he leaves school with a fair knowledge of Latin and general history and some acquaintance with French; although a "true Greek," he knew nothing of the language of Greece; Keats's mother, to whom he was passionately devoted, died in February, 1810, and in the July following Keats's maternal grandmother places him, with his sister and brothers, in the care of two guardians, and makes over about £8,000 to be held in trust for their use; at the direction of Mr. Abbey, one of the trustees, John is withdrawn from school in 1810, at the close of his fifteenth year, and is apprenticed for five years to a surgeon

at Edmonton ; his duties here permit frequent visits to his old school at Enfield, where Cowden Clark encourages him to continue his literary studies, especially in the Elizabethan writers ; Spenser's " Faery Queene " arouses his enthusiasm and fires his ambition to become a poet ; his lines " In Imitation of Spenser " are said to have been the first he wrote, and are ascribed to his sixteenth or eighteenth year ; a fellow surgeon's apprentice at the time describes Keats as " an idle, loafing fellow, always writing poetry."

Late in the autumn of 1814 he quarrels with his master, possibly because he had neglected medicine for poetry, and goes to live by himself in London ; the death of his grandfather and of his only other adult relative about this time throws Keats and his brother and sister upon the mercy of Abbey, their " meddling " guardian ; on reaching London, Keats continues his medical studies at the hospital of Saint Thomas and Saint Guys ; at first, he lodges at 8 Dean Street, with two other students ; Keats is a capable student at the hospital, and does not shirk the routine work ; but his room-mate writes that " his absolute devotion to poetry prevented his having any other tastes or indulging in any vice ;" in February, 1815, he writes the address " To Hope " and the " Sonnet to Leigh Hunt," to honor that writer's release from prison ; during the same year, or earlier, he writes two posthumous sonnets to Byron and Chatterton, the series beginning " Woman When I Behold Thee, Flippant, Vain," and his famous sonnet " On First Looking into Chapman's Homer ;" the latter was composed during the summer, just after a night's reading with Cowden Clark, who had come to reside in Clerkenwell ; in November, 1815, Keats writes his rhymed epistle to Felton Mathew, and in the following February his valentine, " Hadst Thou Lived in the Days of Old," addressed to the future wife of his brother George ; in the spring of 1816, through Cowden Clark, Keats meets Leigh Hunt, who soon becomes his intimate friend and stimulates him along romantic lines, but un-

fortunately also brings upon Keats the obloquy already manifested toward himself by the conservative critics.

On March 3, 1816, Keats is appointed dresser in Guy's Hospital, and on the 25th of the following July he passes creditably an examination as licentiate at Apothecaries' Hall; his first printed verse was the sonnet beginning "O Solitude, if I with Thee Might Dwell," which appeared in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, May 5, 1816; at the home of Hunt Keats receives much literary inspiration, and meets there Shelley and J. H. Reynolds, with whom he forms a close and lasting friendship; he develops a brotherly intimacy, also, with Reynolds's sisters, one of whom afterward married Thomas Hood; in the summer of 1816 Keats removes his lodgings to the Poultry, to be near his brothers, then employed in the counting-house of Mr. Abbey, but spends most of his time at the home of Hunt in the "Vale of Health" at Hampstead, "where a bed was always ready for him in the library;" this is the house celebrated in Keats's verses "Sleep and Poetry;" during the summer of 1817 he also writes at Hunt's house the verses beginning "I Stood Tiptoe Upon a Little Hill," intended as part of a poem on the myth of Endymion, and the fragment called "Calidore;" in the early autumn he is at Margate, where he writes the epistles to his brother George and Cowden Clark and the sonnet beginning "Many the Wonders I This Day Have Seen;" on his return to London lodgings he writes the sonnets "To My Brother" and "Keen, Fitful Gusts Are Whispering;" his familiar letters to friends and relatives, which form such an attractive picture in his later years, begin in the autumn of 1817.

In November, 1817, through Hunt, Keats meets the painter Haydon, to whom he addresses the sonnet "Great Spirits Now on Earth Sojourning;" the result is a warm friendship between the two and a marked influence over Keats by Haydon; during the same month Hunt publishes in his *Examiner* Keats's sonnet "On Looking into Chapman's Homer," and

calls attention to the author's poetic ability, coupling his name with Shelley's; four others of Keats's sonnets appear in the *Examiner* during the following spring, and "his poetic vocation seems to have been sealed;" although he has performed some successful operations as a surgeon, Keats determines, against the remonstrance of his guardian, Mr. Abbey, to abandon the profession of surgery and to bring out a volume of his verses; Shelley at first advises Keats to withhold his verses, but afterward helps him to find a publisher; the volume appears in March, 1817, with a dedication to Leigh Hunt; the book has no sale, and Keats's brothers are disgusted; in April, 1817, on the advice of Haydon, Keats goes alone to the Isle of Wight, that he may "be alone to improve himself," and takes lodgings at Shanklin, where he writes his "Ode on the Sea," published in the *Champion* for August, 1817, and continues his "Endymion," begun but abandoned long before; he is aided financially by the publishers of the *London Magazine*, who agree to publish "Endymion" when completed, and allow Keats to draw on them in advance; in May he goes to Margate, where he is joined by his brother Tom; they go thence to Canterbury for several weeks, and in the midsummer of 1817 the three brothers are together at Hampstead in Wellwalk; here Keats forms a fast friendship with C. W. Dilke and C. A. Brown, literary men who live at Lawn Bank in John Street; he declines to visit Shelley at Great Marlow, "in order that he might," as he said, "have his own unfettered scope;" he spends the month of September, 1817, at Oxford, at the home of a friend, and begins there his letters to his young sister Fannie; while here, also, he first shows signs of poor health; he had heretofore been robust, and, during 1817 or 1818, had thrashed a butcher at Hampstead; he returns to London in October, and finds a quarrel on between Hunt and Haydon and some coolness in Hunt toward himself; Keats spends the last part of November at Burford Bridge, near Dorking, where he finishes

"Endymion," completing the work exactly within the time he had allowed himself for it; here he also studies Shakespeare's minor poems and sonnets; he returns to Hampstead in December; in the early winter he writes for the *Champion* three short pieces of dramatic criticism, including that on "Richard III.;" during the winter he reads the proofs of "Endymion," enjoys himself socially, and, through Haydon, meets Wordsworth, who, when Keats recites his "Hymn to Pan" from "Endymion," by Wordsworth's request, calls it "a pretty piece of paganism;" during the winter Keats also meets William Godwin, Charles Lamb, and Hazlitt, whose lectures he regularly attends; during the winter he also writes several minor poems and sonnets, including those beginning "O Golden-tongued Romance with Serene Lute" and "Time's Sea Has Been Five Years at Its Slow Ebb" and those entitled "The Nile" (written February 4th, in competition with Hunt and Shelley), "To Apollo," "To Robin Hood," and "On Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair."

In March, 1818, Keats goes to Teignmouth to nurse his invalid brother Tom; he remains until about May 15th, and while at Teignmouth writes "Isabella" and the preface to "Endymion," and studies "Paradise Lost" with a view to writing his "Hyperion;" he writes here, also, his metrical epistle to Reynolds; returning with his brother to Hampstead, he remains five weeks; meantime "Endymion" appears, but attracts little attention; after the marriage and emigration of his brother George to America, in June, 1818, Keats starts on a walking tour with his friend Charles Armitage Brown through the Lake District and Scotland; they visit Lancaster, Windermere, Ambleside, Derwent-water, Keswick, Carlisle, Dumfries, The Giant's Causeway, Glasgow, the Trossachs, the Hebrides, and Inverness; during the trip Keats writes many letters and verses, but only his "Meg Merrilies" and his "Fingal's Cave" are worth preservation; the exposure in tramping in the Highlands brings on a throat



trouble, from which Keats never recovered ; by the advice of a physician he sails at once from Cromarty for London, and reaches his Hampstead lodgings August 18th ; for the next three and a half months he nurses his dying brother Tom, while his loneliness and the insulting criticisms of his "Endymion" in *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review* discourage Keats and injure his health ; but he rallies, and declares, "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death ;" much sympathy for him is privately expressed, and an anonymous adviser sends him £25.

In October, 1818, he begins his series of long journal-letters addressed to his brother in America ; he had begun to write "Hyperion" in September ; soon afterward he writes "I never was in love, yet the voice and shape of a woman have haunted me these two days. . . . This morning poetry has conquered, I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life. . . . There is an awful warmth about my heart, like a load of immortality" ; this first attraction appears transitory, but Keats soon finds "his real enslaver" in the person of Fanny Brawne, a girl of seventeen, daughter of a widow living in Downshire Street, near by ; Keats describes her to his brother as "beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable, and strange ;" although she seems to have had little appreciation of Keats's gifts and little consideration for his circumstances and temperament, Miss Brawne becomes engaged to him during the winter ; she seems to have been an accomplished flirt, and entered freely into social pleasures from which Keats's health and occupations debarred him ; his brother Tom dies December 1, 1818, and Keats immediately complies with Brown's invitation to come and keep house with him at Wentworth Place ; he works, during the winter, on "Hyperion," and sends to his American friends his two lyrics, "Bards of Passion and of Mirth" and "Ever Let the Fancy Roam ;" late in January, 1819, he goes with Brown to Sussex, where they visit Dilke and other

mutual friends; while at Bedhampton, in the house of Mr. John Snook, Keats writes "The Eve of St. Agnes," apparently composed in part before, and begins his fragment, "The Eve of St. Mark;" he returns to Wentworth Place in February, and, during the ensuing spring, with no sanguine belief in their success or care for their preservation, he composes there his finest meditative odes, including "On Indolence," "To Psyche," "To a Nightingale," and probably "To Melancholy;" the ode "To a Nightingale" was first printed in July, 1819, in "The Annals of the Fine Arts;" during the same spring he writes the ballad "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*" (which he copies for his brother "with laughing comment, as if it were nothing at all"), his "Chorus of Fairies," written for a projected mask or opera, and his sonnets beginning "Why Did I Laugh To-night?" and "As Hermes Took to His Feathers Light," besides the two on "Fame" and that "To Sleep;" "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*" was printed by Hunt in the *Indicator*, May 20, 1820, with the signature "Canone;" meantime Keats is worried by failing health, unrequited love, the contempt of literary critics, and financial troubles; during the summer of 1819 his supplies from his guardian are entirely stopped for a time, while Haydon and other friends to whom Keats had loaned over £200 are unable to pay him; he had "no extravagancies of his own," and seems to have forgotten his share in the direct legacy under his grandfather's will; he seriously contemplates abandoning literature and taking up journalism or surgery for a living; he is dissuaded by Brown, who seems fully to have appreciated Keats, and who loans him money for his needs during the summer; Keats and Brown then go to join their friend Rice at Shanklin, where the two begin to collaborate on a tragedy on Otho the Great, Brown making the plot and Keats writing the dialogue; Keats also begins his "Lamia" at Shanklin; on August 12th Keats and Brown remove to Winchester, hoping thus to improve Keats's health;

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he is better at Winchester, where he remains two months, and where he and Brown finish "Otho the Great," while Keats begins a new tragedy, completes "Lamia," adds to the "The Eve of St. Mark," and writes his ode to "Autumn;" meantime he studies Italian zealously, and writes long letters to America, in which he determines "to cease fretting and face life bravely;" he takes a lodging at 25 College Street, London, settles there October 10, 1819, and tries to get employment as dramatic critic on London journals; he also proposes "to write on the liberal side of the question for whoever will pay me;" but consumption and hypochondria soon take possession of him; on October 16th he settles with Brown at Westminster, so as to be next door to his *fiancée*, and "from this time forth he knew neither peace of mind nor health of body again;" about this time "Otho the Great" is rejected, without examination, by the management of the Covent Garden Theatre, and is provisionally accepted by the management of Drury Lane; November 17, 1819, Keats writes to his publishers: "The writing of a few fine plays is still my greatest ambition, when I do feel ambitious, which is very seldom;" inspired with Byron's success with "Beppo" and "Don Juan," Keats plans a fairy poem, which he begins under the title "Cap and Bells;" about this time he writes to Fanny Brawne in "piteous love-plaints," published posthumously, poems which he would doubtless never have voluntarily published; he completes eighty-eight Spenserian stanzas, which are signed with the *nom de plume* "Lucy Vaughn Lloyd;" at the same time he takes up "Hyperion," which had been thrown aside for six months, amplifies and recasts it, and prepares the allegorical preamble; this recast has often wrongly been taken for a first revision, as it is greatly inferior to the original poem; it reflects Keats's bitterness and despondency at the time; he seems at this time to have sought relief from his "rooted misery" in some dissipation, which only aggravated his maladies; he

begins taking laudanum, but abandons it on Brown's remonstrance.

From Christmas, 1819, he gives up writing on "Cap and Bells" and "The Vision," and is confined to his home most of the time by ill-health; he receives a flying visit in January, 1820, from his brother George, who finds Keats "not a sane being;" on February 3, 1820, after a night-ride outside a coach from London to Hampstead, he is seized with a hemorrhage; nervous prostration follows, and Keats is confined to his bed for six weeks, meantime tenderly nursed by Brown and exchanging daily notes with Fanny Brawne; partially regaining his strength in March, he goes with Brown to Gravesend, and returns to a lodging in Wesleyan Place, Kentish Farm, so as to be near Leigh Hunt, while Brown makes another tour in Scotland; here Keats reads the proof of a volume of poems written after "Endymion" and published in July, 1820, under the title of "Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems;" all the poems of this volume, which made Keats immortal, were written between March, 1818, and October, 1819; he says, "I feel sure I should write, from the mere yearning and tenderness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labors should be burnt every morning and no eye ever rest upon them;" this volume opens the eyes of critics like Lamb and Shelley to Keats's true genius, while even Jeffrey at once writes a laudatory critique in the *Edinburgh Review*; but fresh hemorrhages, followed by increased despondency and weakness, come to Keats in June; the Hunts take him into their home and nurse him tenderly, but his jealous misery causes him to distrust his best friends; on August 12th he leaves Hunt's house, charging him with opening a letter from Fanny Brawne, and is taken in by the latter's mother in Wentworth Place.

On partially regaining strength, he determines to go to Italy for his health; he declines Shelley's cordial invitation to visit him in Pisa, and sails from London, September 18,

1820, with his more intimate friend, the painter Severn ; on the voyage toward Rome he lands for a day on the Dorset coast, where he composes his last poem, the sonnet beginning " Bright star, would I were as steadfast as thou art ; " he projects, also, but does not write a poem on " Sabrina ; " after a month's voyage he and Severn reach Naples ; he declines a second invitation to visit Shelley, and starts with Severn for Rome about November 12th ; at Rome they take lodgings in the Piazza di Spagna, where Keats spends the last three months of his life ; after a violent relapse in December, he begs Severn to let him end his life with laudanum ; Severn nurses him assiduously ; during the last days Keats reads much in Jeremy Taylor's " Holy Living and Dying," and is consoled by Severn's playing of Haydn's sonatas ; he daily asks his physician, " When will this posthumous life of mine come to an end ? " and asks that his epitaph be, " Here lies one whose name was writ in water ; " he dies at Rome, in Severn's arms, February 23, 1821, and is buried there in the old Protestant cemetery ; Severn was buried by his side in 1881.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

1. **Love of Beauty.**—In his last days Keats wrote:  
 "If I should die, I have left no immortal works behind me; but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things."

"He had an unerring instinct for the poetic use of things, and for him they had no other use. We are apt to talk of the classic renaissance as of a phenomenon long past, nor ever to be returned, and to think the Greeks and Romans alone had the mighty magic to work such a miracle. To me, one of the most interesting aspects of Keats is that in him we

have an example of the renaissance going on almost under our own eyes, and that the intellectual ferment was in him kindled by a purely English leaven."—*Lowell*.

"The truth is that the yearning passion for the Beautiful which was with Keats, as he himself truly says, the master-passion, is not a passion of the sensuous or sentimental man, is not a passion of the sensuous or sentimental poet. It is an intellectual and spiritual passion. It is, as he again says, 'the mighty abstract idea of Beauty in all things.' . . . He has made himself remembered and remembered as no merely sensuous poet could be ; and he has done it by having 'loved the principle of beauty in all things.' . . . By virtue of his feeling for beauty and of his perception of the vital connexion of beauty with truth, Keats accomplished so much in poetry, that in one of the two great modes by which poetry interprets, in the faculty of naturalistic interpretation, in what we call natural magic, he ranks with Shakespeare.—*Matthew Arnold*.

"Keats, youthful and prodigal, the magician of unnumbered beauties, which neither author nor reader can think of counting or assessing, is the Keats of our affection. Mature him, and he would be a more perfect planner and executant, and promoted to yet loftier office among the immortals ; but he could not win upon us more, could not leave us a more lovely memory nor so priceless a treasure of regret. . . . The susceptibility which is visible in his poems to all forms of beauty and delight, and the unexhausted inspiration and spontaneous flow which they exhibit, needed nothing but one small impulsion to rouse him and start him on his course."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"There is no descent into his soul of that spirit of beauty, that 'awful loveliness,' before whose presence the poet's sensations are stilled, and in whose celebration his language is adoration. In the place of this, there is an all-absorbing relish and delicate perception of beauty—a kind of feeding



on 'nectared sweets'—a glow of delight in the abandonment of the soul to soft and delicious images, framed by fancy out of rich sensations. . . . 'The Eve of St. Agnes' is delicately beautiful, and perfect of its kind. . . . The sense of luxury is its predominant characteristic, and though full of exquisite fancies, it has no grand imaginations. . . . That the poetry of Keats is full of beauties, that it evinces a most remarkable richness and sensitiveness of imagination, . . . is cheerfully acknowledged by everyone who reads poetry without having his fancy and imagination shut in by prejudice."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"In what other English poet are you so certain of never opening a page without lighting upon the loveliest imagery and the most eloquent expressions? Name one. Compare any succession of their pages at random, and see if the young poet is not sure to present his stock of beauty; crude, it may be, in many instances; too indiscriminate in general; never, perhaps, thoroughly perfect in cultivation; but there it is, exquisite of its kind and filling envy with despair."—*Leigh Hunt*.

"Meek child of earth! thou wilt not shame  
The sweet dead poet's holy name;  
The god of music gave thee birth,  
Called from the crimson-spotted earth,  
Where, sobbing his young life away,  
His own fair Hyacinthus lay.  
The hyacinth my garden gave  
Shall lie upon that Roman grave!"

—*O. W. Holmes*.

"Greater lyrical poetry the world may have seen, lovelier it surely has never seen, nor ever can it possibly see. . . . The faultless force and the profound subtlety of this deep and cunning instinct for the absolute expression of absolute natural beauty can hardly be questioned or overlooked; and this is doubtless the one main distinctive gift or power which

denotes him as a poet among all his equals, and gives him right to a rank forever beside Coleridge and Shelley. . . . Of these [Odes] perhaps the two nearest to absolute perfection, to the triumphant achievement and accomplishment of the very utmost beauty possible to human words, may be that to Autumn and that on a Grecian Urn."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"He lived in a sort of ecstasy during no small portion of these solitary hours, when he would call the wind his wife, the stars through the window-panes his children, and rest contented in the abstract idea of beauty in all things. . . . Although to Keats the worship of beauty in all things was the essence of his life, and the delight that sprang from it the essence of his joy, he did not find in these the whole of life."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"When the 'Endymion' comes to be critically considered, it will be found that its excellence consists in its clear comprehension of that ancient spirit of beauty, to which Keats's outward perceptions so excellently ministered, and which undertook to ennoble and purify, as far as was consistent with their physical existence, the instinctive desires of mankind."—*Mary Russell Mitford*.

"Keats wrote the famous sonnet [on Chapman's Homer] and struck for the first time that rich and mellow note, resonant of a beauty deeper even than its own magical cadence, heard for the first time in English poetry. The sonnet has an amplitude of serene beauty which makes it the fitting prelude of Keats's later works. . . . It was no obvious and superficial beauty which mirrored itself in his soul and which he was to give back line for line. His springs were in the secret places, fed by the spirit of God and discovered alone by those who hold the divining-rod of genius. . . . 'The Eve of St. Agnes'—a vision of beauty, deep, rich, and glowing as one of those dyed windows in which the heart of the Middle Ages still burns. The beauty of his work has by strange lack of insight been taken as evidence of its defect in

range and depth. It is not beauty of form and color alone which gives the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and the ode 'To Autumn' their changeless spell; it is that interior beauty of which Keats was thinking when he wrote those profound lines, the very essence of his creed: 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.' . . . The ode 'To Autumn' and 'The Eve of St. Agnes' are beautiful to the very heart; they are not clothed with beauty; they are beauty itself. . . . His soul was in contact with the soul of things, not with their surface beauty."—*H. W. Mabie*.

"What shall I say of 'The Eve of St. Agnes?' What, indeed, can I say but that it is the most exquisite, the most perfect poem in the world. It is all innocence, all purity, all music, all picture, all delight, and all beauty."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;  
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,  
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
She seemed a splendid angel, newly-drest,  
Save wings, for Heaven."—*The Eve of St. Agnes*.

"When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."  
—*Ode to a Grecian Urn*.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing.  
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing  
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,  
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth  
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,  
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd ways  
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon  
 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
 With the green world they live in."—*Endymion*.

## 2. Delicate Fancy—Sympathetic Imagination.—

"Keats certainly had more of the penetrative and sympathetic imagination which belongs to the poet, of that imagination which identifies itself with the momentary object of its contemplation, than any man of these later days. It is not merely that he has studied the Elizabethans and caught their turn of thought, but that he really sees things with their sovereign eye and feels them with their electrified senses. His imagination was his bliss and bane."—*Lowell*.

"Keats was born a poet of the most poetical kind. All his feelings came to him through a poetical medium or were speedily colored by it. He enjoyed a jest as heartily as any one, and sympathized with the lowliest commonplace; but the next minute his thoughts were in a garden of enchantment, with nymphs and fauns and shapes of exalted humanity. It might be said of him that he never beheld an oak-tree without seeing the Dryad."—*Leigh Hunt*.

"They [his poems] are flushed all over with the rich lights of fancy and so colored and bestrewn with the flowers of poetry that even while perplexed and bewildered in their labyrinths, it is impossible to resist the intoxication of their sweetness or to shut our hearts to the enchantments they so lavishly present. . . . Without much incident or

many characters, and with little wit, wisdom, or arrangement, a number of bright pictures are presented to the imagination and a fine feeling expressed of those mysterious relations by which visible external things are assimilated with inward thoughts and emotions and become the images and exponents of all passions and affections."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"Keats has come to his own, and it was not the surgeon's shop; it was the great world of the imagination, in the power of realizing which to eyes less penetrating and to minds less sensitive he was to be without a master so far as time and growth were given him. . . . How deep was the loveliness of that early putting forth of the young imagination! It was no delicate fancy, no light touch of skill, no precocious brightness of spirit, which Keats gave the world: it was pure imagination, that rarest and most precious because most creative of gifts.—*H. W. Mabie*.

"Here we come to one of the most intrinsic properties of Keats's poetry. He is a master of imagination in verbal form: he gifts us with things so finely and magically said as to convey an imaginative impression."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"With what skill he had learned to call up a picture in all its distinctness of form and color imagination, is best seen in the opening stanzas of 'St. Agnes' Eve,' and in the unrivalled description of the painted window in the same poem."—*W. J. Courthope*.

"In him an imagination and fancy of much natural capacity were lodged in a frame too weak to sustain the shocks of life. . . . In his later works the imagination of Keats was somewhat released from the thralldom of sensation, and evinced more independent power. The 'Eve of St. Agnes' is delicately beautiful and perfect of its kind; but it is not poetry of the highest order. The sense of luxury is its predominant characteristic, and though full of exquisite fancies, it has no grand imaginations."—*E. P. Whipple*.

“What we independently know enables us to say that it was pre-eminently as a poet that he was fitted to be distinguished. He was constitutionally a poet, one of those minds in whom, to speak generally, imagination or ideality is the sovereign faculty.”—*David Masson*.

“Fancy rather than form, sentiment rather than art, predominate.”—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“The doors all looked as if they oped themselves,  
The windows as if latched by fays and elves,  
And from them comes a silver flash of light,  
As from the westward of a summer's night ;  
Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes  
Gone mad through olden songs and poesies.”

—*Reminiscences*.

“Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane,  
In some untrodden region of my mind,  
Where branchèd thoughts, new-grown with pleasant pain,  
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :  
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees  
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;  
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds and bees,  
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep.”

—*Ode to Psyche*.

“Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight,  
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,  
And taper fingers catching at all things,  
To bind them all about with tiny rings.”

—*I Stood Tiptoe Upon a Little Hill*.

✓ 3. **Exuberant Imagery.**—“Keats's early poetry, indeed, partook plentifully of the exuberance of youth. . . .

His region is a wilderness of sweets—flowers of all hue and weeds of glorious feature.”—*Leigh Hunt*.

“The great distinction between him and these divine authors [Jonson and Milton] is, that imagination in them is subordinate to reason and judgment, while, with him, it is paramount and supreme. . . . His ornaments are poured out without measure or restraint and with no apparent design but to unburden the breast of the author, and give vent to the overflowing vein of his fancy. . . . The thin and scanty tissue of his story is merely the light frame-work on which his wreaths are suspended; and while his imaginations go rambling and entangling themselves everywhere, like wild honeysuckles, all idea of sober reason and plan and consistency is utterly forgotten, and we are strangled in their waste of fertility. A great part of the work is written in the strongest and most fantastical manner that can be imagined. It seems as if the author had ventured everything that occurred to him in the shape of a glittering image or striking expression—taken the first word that presented itself to make up a rhyme and then made that word the germ of a new cluster of images—a hint for a new excursion of fancy—and so wandered on, equally forgetful whence he came and heedless whither he was going, till he had covered his pages with an interminable arabesque of connected and incongruous figures, that multiplied as they extended, and were only harmonized by the brightness of their tints and the graces of their forms.”—*Francis Jeffrey*.

“Happy the young poet who has the saving fault of exuberance, if he have also the shaping faculty that sooner or later will amend it.”—*Lowell*.

“The spirit of art was always vividly near and precious to Keats. He fashioned it exuberantly into a thousand shapes, now of gem-like exquisiteness, now mere slight or showy trinkets; and of these the scrupulous taste will even pronounce the cheapest, and rightly pronounce them, to be trumpery. Still

there is the feeling of art, however provoking its masquerade."—*W. M. Rossetti.*

"Since Spenser, Keats is the most poetical of poets, because he saw with the imagination; and what he saw flashed into images, figures, metaphors—the fresh and glowing speech of poetry. . . . ['Endymion'] has the freshness of feeling and perception, the glow of imagination, the profusion and riot of imagery . . . which one would expect from so immature a mind. . . . Its profusion of imagery . . . is the fault of excessive romanticism."—*H. W. Mabie.*

"He kept aloof from opinion, doctrine, controversy, as by a natural instinct; he was most at home in the world of sense and imagery, where it was his pleasure to weave forth phantasies; and if his intelligence did now and then indulge in a discursive flight, it was by way of exercise, or because opinions, doctrines, and controversies may be considered as facts and therefore as materials to be worked into poetic language . . . He manifests a bewildering plentitude of luxuriant invention [in 'Endymion']."—*David Masson.*

"The 'Ode to Psyche' is a beautifully wrought specimen of Keats's jeweler's workmanship, of his power of seizing on an abstract thought and chasing it with fanciful imagery."—*W. J. Courthope.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Thou still unravished bride of quietness!

Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,  
Sylvian historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?"

—*Ode to a Grecian Urn.*



“ She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die ;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu ; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips :  
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
 Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
 Can burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine ;  
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung.”  
—*Ode on Melancholy.*

“ O magic sleep ! O comfortable bird,  
 That broodest o’er the troubled sea of the mind  
 Till it is hushed and smooth ! O unconfined  
 Restraint ! imprisoned liberty ! great key  
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
 Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves  
 And moonlight ; ay, to all the mazy world  
 Of silvery enchantment !—who, upfurled  
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,  
 But renovates and lives ? ”—*Endymion.*

**4. Splendor — Magnificence.** — “ His fragment of ‘Hyperion’ seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus.”—*Lord Byron.*

“ [‘Hyperion’] presents the majesty, the austere beauty, and the simplicity of Grecian temples enriched with Grecian sculpture.”—*De Quincey.*

“ ‘Hyperion,’ with its Titanic opening and Doric grandeur of tone, inviolate from first to last.”—*E. C. Stedman.*

“ We see also incontestable proof of the greatness and purity of his poetic gift in the constant return towards equilibrium and repose in his later poems, and it is a repose always lofty and clear-aired, like that of the eagle balanced in incommunicable sunshine.”—*Lowell.*

"Witness the 'Sonnet on Looking into Chapman's Homer'—epical in the splendor and dignity of its images, and terminating in the noblest Greek simplicity."—*Leigh Hunt*.

"Another splendor on his mouth alit,

That mouth whence it was wont to draw the breath  
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit

And pass into the panting heart beneath  
With lightning and with music."—*Shelley*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"His palace bright,

Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold,  
And touched with shade of bronzed obelisks  
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,  
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ;  
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds  
Flush'd angrily, while sometimes eagles' wings,  
Unseen before by gods or wondering men,  
Darken'd the place."—*Hyperion*.

"O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang  
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth  
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death  
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ;  
Who lovest to see the hamadryads dress  
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken,  
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and harken."

—*Endymion*.

"It keeps eternal whisperings around  
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell  
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell  
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.  
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,  
That scarcely will the very smallest shell  
Be moved for days from where it sometime fell,  
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.

O ye who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,  
 Feast them upon the wideness of the sea ;  
 O ye whose ears are dimmed with uproar rude,  
 Or fed too much with cloying melody,—  
 Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth and brood,  
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired ! ”

—*On the Sea.*

**5. Deep Pathos.**—Near the close of his short, sad life Keats exclaims, “ Oh, that something fortunate had ever happened to me or my brothers—then might I hope—but despair is forced upon me as a habit.” Not infrequently in his poems we find traces of the dark cloud that overhung all his days.

“ The very sadness of his lovely odes, ‘ To a Nightingale,’ ‘ On a Grecian Urn,’ ‘ To Autumn,’ ‘ To Psyche,’ is the pleasant melancholy of the springtime of the heart.”—*Henry Van Dyke.*

“ I will only say of ‘ Isabella ’ that no English poet of the period of whom I have any knowledge, could have infused into it such tenderness and pathos as Keats has. . . . There is an indescribable melancholy about this poem [‘ There is a charm in footing slow ’], which is one of the best he ever wrote.”—*R. H. Stoddard.*

“ O Pang-dowered Poet, whose reverberant lips  
 And heart-strung lyre awoke the moon’s eclipse.”

—*D. G. Rossetti.*

“ ‘ Isabella,’ feeble and awkward in narrative to a degree almost incredible in a student of Dryden and a pupil of Leigh Hunt, is overcharged with episodical effects of splendid and pathetic expression beyond the reach of either.”—*A. C. Swinburne.*

“ Melancholy is most of all the mark he set upon his poetry—a mark which has been copied by so many later versifiers that it has seemed as if [it were] grief and pining.”—*C. F. Richardson.*

“ The last words of his ‘ lost wanderer from Arden ’ are

terrible in their burden of agony ; they are as the wail of one who calls across a waste of dead water, and hears only his own cry return to him."—*Hall Caine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim ;  
Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;  
Where palsy shakes a few sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale and spectre-thin, and dies ;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow,  
And leaden-eyed despairs ;  
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow."  
—*Ode to a Nightingale*.

" When by my solitary hearth I sit,  
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom ;  
When no fair dreams before my ' mind's eye ' flit,  
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom ;  
Sweet Hope ! ethereal balm upon me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head.  
. . . . .  
When e'er the fate of those I hold most dear  
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,  
O bright-eyed Hope my morbid fancy cheer ;  
Let me awhile thy brightest comforts borrow :  
Thy heaven-born radiance around me shed,  
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my head ! "  
—*To Hope*.

" Why did I laugh to-night ? No voice will tell ;  
No God, no Demon of severe response,  
Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell.  
Then to my human heart I turn at once.

Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone ;  
 I say, why did I laugh ? O mortal pain !  
 O Darkness ! Darkness ! ever must I moan,  
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain.  
 Why did I laugh ? I know this Being's lease,  
 My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads ;  
 Yet would I on this very midnight cease,  
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds ;  
 Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,  
 But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed."

—*Sonnet.*

✓ 6. **Mythological Invention.**—"There is something very curious, too, we think, in the way in which he has dealt with the Pagan mythology, of which he has made so much use in his poetry. Instead of presenting its imaginary persons under the trite and vulgar traits that belong to them in the ordinary systems, little more is borrowed from these than the general conception of their condition and relations ; and an original character and distinct individuality is then bestowed upon them, which has all the merit of invention and all the grace and attraction of the fictions on which it is engrafted. The ancients, though they probably did not stand in any great awe of their deities, have yet abstained very much from any minute or dramatic representation of their feelings and affections. . . . The author before us, however, and some of his contemporaries, have dealt differently with the subject ; and, sheltering the violence of the fiction under the ancient traditionary fable, have in reality created and imagined an entire new set of characters, and have brought closely and minutely before us the loves and sorrows and perplexities of beings with whose names and supernatural attributes we had long been familiar, without any sense or feeling of their personal character."—*Francis Jeffrey.*

"Selecting, as in 'Endymion,' a legend of the Grecian mythology, or, as in 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil,' a story

of Boccaccio, or, as in 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' the hint of a Middle Age superstition, or, as in 'Lamia,' a story of Greek witchcraft, he sets himself to weave out the little text of substance so given into a linked succession of imaginary movements and incidents taking place in the dim lights of ideal scenery."—*David Masson*.

"No English poet since Shakespeare was ever so possessed by the lovely mythology of Greece, which here discloses itself in the freshness and fulness of forest life and feeling."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

"The manner in which Keats set about relating the Greek story ['Endymion'], as he had thus conceived it, was as far from being a Greek or 'classical' manner as possible. . . . But though Keats sees the Greek world from afar, he sees it truly. The Greek touch is not his, but in his own rich and decorated English way he writes with a sure insight into the vital meaning of Greek ideas. For the story of the war of the Titans and Olympians [in 'Hyperion'] he had nothing to guide him except scraps from the ancient writers, principally Hesiod, as retailed by the compilers of classical dictionaries; and from the scholar's point of view his version, we can see, would at many points have been arbitrary, mixing up Latin conceptions and nomenclature with Greek, and introducing much new matter of his own invention. But as to the essential meaning of that warfare and its results . . . it could not possibly be divined more truly, or illustrated with more beauty and force, than by Keats in the speech of Oceanus in the Second Book."—*Sidney Colvin*.

"In 'Endymion' the lines of the old Greek story are completely lost, and the subject becomes merely a vehicle for the expression of the poet's own individual moods and caprices of fancy."—*W. J. Courthope*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Until at length old Saturn lifted up  
 His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,  
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,  
 And that fair kneeling goddess ; and then spake  
 As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard  
 Shook horrid with such aspen malady :  
 ‘ O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,  
 Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;  
 Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;  
 Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape  
 Is Saturn’s ; tell me, if thou hear’st the voice  
 Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,  
 Naked and bare of its great diadem,  
 Peers like the front of Saturn.’ ”—*Hyperion*.

“ Upon a time before the faery broods  
 Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,  
 Before King Oberon’s bright diadem,  
 Sceptre, and mantle, clasped with dewy gem,  
 Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns  
 From rushes green, and brakes, and cow-slip’d lawns,  
 The ever-smitten Hermes empty left  
 His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft :  
 From high Olympus had he stolen light,  
 On this side of Jove’s clouds, to escape the sight  
 Of his great summoner, and made retreat  
 Into a forest on the shores of Crete.  
 For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt  
 A nymph, to whom all hoofed satyrs knelt ;  
 At whose white feet the languid Titans poured  
 Pearls, while on land they withered and adored.”

—*Lamia*.

“ What first inspired a bard of old to sing  
 Narcissus pining o’er the untainted spring ?  
 In some delicious ramble, he had found  
 A little space with boughs all woven round ;

And in the midst of all a clearer pool  
 Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool  
 The blue sky ; here and there serenely peeping  
 Through tendril wreaths fantastically creeping ;  
 And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,  
 A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,  
 Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,  
 To woo its own sad image into nearness :  
 Deaf to light Zephyrus, it would not move ;  
 But still would seem to droop, to pine, to love.  
 So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,  
 Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy shot ;  
 Nor was it long ere he had told the tale  
 Of young Narcissus and sad Echo's Vale."

*I Stood Tiptoe Upon a Little Hill.*

7. **Vagueness—Mysticism.**—[In the "Ode to a Nightingale"] "You do not know what the house is, or where, nor who the bird. Perhaps a king himself. But you see the window open on the perilous sea, and hear the voice from out the tree in which it is nested, sending its warble over the foam. The whole is at once vague and particular, full of mysterious life. You see nobody, though something is heard ; and you know not what of beauty or wickedness is to come over that sea."—*Leigh Hunt.*

"The modes of existence in the two parties to the love-fable of 'Endymion,' their relation to each other and to us, their prospects finally, and the obstacles to the instant realization of these prospects—all these things are more vague and incomprehensible than the reveries of an oyster. . . . The very midsummer madness of affectation, of false vapory sentiment, and of fantastic effeminacy, seemed to me combined in Keats's 'Endymion' when I first saw it."—*De Quincey.*

"Besides the riot and extravagance of his fancy, the scope and substance of Mr. Keats's poetry is rather too dreamy and abstracted to excite the strongest interest or to sustain the at-



tention through a work of any great compass or extent. He deals too much with shadowy and incomprehensible beings, and is too constantly rapt into an extra-mundane Elysium, to command a lasting interest with ordinary mortals."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"As Hermes once took to his feathers light,  
 When lullèd Argus, baffled, swooned and slept,  
 So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright,  
 So played, so charmed, so conquered, so bereft  
 The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes,  
 And seeing it asleep, so fled away,  
 Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,  
 Nor unto Tempe, where Jove grieved a day,  
 But to that second circle of sad Hell,  
 Where in the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw  
 Of rain and hailstones, lovers need not tell  
 Their sorrows—pale were the sweet lips I saw,  
 Pale were the lips I kissed, the fair form  
 I floated with about that melancholy storm."  
 —*On a Dream*.

"I met a lady in the meads,  
 Full beautiful—a faery's child;  
 Her hair was long, her foot was light,  
 And her eyes were wild.  
 . . . . .  
 I set her on my pacing steed,  
 And nothing else saw all day long,  
 For side-long would she bend, and sing  
 A faery song.  
 . . . . .  
 She took me to her elfin grot,  
 And there she wept, and sighed full sore,  
 And there I shut her wild, wild eyes  
 With kisses four,

And there she lullèd me asleep  
 And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!  
 The latest dream I ever dream'd  
 On the cold hill's side.

They cried—' *La Belle Dame sans Merci*  
 Hath thee in thrall!  
 I saw their starved lips in the gloam,  
 With horrid warning gapèd wide,  
 And I awoke and found me here,  
 On the cold hill's side."

—*La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

"Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,  
 That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,  
 And wither drearily on barren moors:  
 Dread opener of mysterious doors  
 Leading to universal knowledge—see,  
 Great son of Dryope  
 The many that are come to pay their vows  
 With leaves about their brows!"—*Endymion*.

**8. Sensitiveness—Sensuousness.**—Of all our great writers, Keats is the most sensitive. While this characteristic, when carried to an extreme, has subjected him to much severe criticism, it is also the secret of his rare power; for, as Lowell justly says, "A man cannot have a sensuous nature and be pachydermatous at the same time; and if he be imaginative as well as sensuous, he suffers just in proportion to the amount of his imagination." This quality of Keats's style appears especially in his letters and other writings composed shortly before his untimely death. Speaking of the lady to whom he was so passionately attached, he says, "Oh that I could be buried near where she lives! I am afraid to write to her, to receive a letter from her—to see her hand-writing would break my heart." And a little later, after lying peacefully awhile, he said to a friend, "I can feel the flowers growing over me."

"Every one of Keats's poems was a sacrifice of vitality; . . . even yet, as we turn the leaves, they seem to warm and thrill our fingers with the flush of his fine senses and the flutter of his electrical nerves. . . . Three men, almost contemporaneous with each other, Wordsworth, Keats, and Byron, were the great means of bringing back English poetry from the sandy deserts of rhetoric and recovering for her her triple inheritance of simplicity, sensuousness, and passion. . . . Without losing its sensuousness, his poetry refined itself and grew more inward, and the sensational was elevated into the typical by the control of that fine sense which underlies the senses and is the spirit of them."—*Lowell*.

"Keats has, above all, a sense of what is pleasurable and open in the life of nature: for him she is the *Alma Parens*: his expression is, therefore, more than Guérin's, something genial, outward, and sensuous. No one can question the eminency, in Keats's poetry, of the quality of sensuousness. Keats as a poet is abundantly and enchantingly sensuous; the question with some people will be whether he is anything else. Many things may be brought forward to show him as under the fascination and sole dominion of sense and desiring nothing better. There is the exclamation in one of his letters: 'Oh for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!' . . . [In his love letters] we have the tone, or rather the entire want of tone, the abandonment of all reticence and all dignity, of the mere sensuous man, of the man who is passion's slave. . . . This sensuous strain Keats had, and a man of his poetic power could not, whatever his strain, but show his talent in it. But he has something more and something better. We who believe Keats to have been, by his promise, at any rate, if not fully by his performance, one of the very greatest of English poets, and who believe also that a merely sensuous man cannot either by promise or performance be a very great poet, because poetry interprets life, and so large and noble a part of life is outside

such a man's ken—we cannot but look for signs in him of something more than sensuousness, for signs of character and virtue. There is Haydon's story of him, how he once covered his tongue and throat as far as he could reach with Cayenne pepper, in order to appreciate the delicious coldness of claret in all its glory—his own expression."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"In him an imagination and fancy of much natural capacity were lodged in a frame too weak to sustain the shocks of life and too sensitive for the development of high and sturdy thought. . . . His nature was essentially sensitive. Far from being independent of others, he held his life at the mercy of others.

"In his early poems Keats appears as a kind of youthful Spenser, without Spenser's moral sense or judgment. His soul floats in a 'sea of rich and ripe sensations.' The odors, forms, sounds, and colors of nature take him captive. There is little reaction of his mind on his sensations. He grows faint and languid with the excess of light and loveliness which stream into his soul. . . . All that is mighty in nature and man is too apt to be sicklied o'er with fanciful sentimentalities. The gods are transformed into green girls, and the sublime and beautiful turned to favor and prettiness. Everything is luscious, sweet, dainty, and debilitating, in his sense of love and beauty. There is no descent into his soul of that spirit of Beauty, that 'awful loveliness,' before whose presence the poet's sensations are stilled, and in whose celebration his language is adoration. In the place of this there is an all-absorbing relish and delicate perception of beauties—a kind of feeding on 'nectared sweets'—a glow of delight in the abandonment of the soul to soft and delicious images, framed by fancy out of rich sensations. It is rather reverie than inspiration. . . . This bewildering sense of physical pleasure was generally predominant in Keats. . . . A keen sensitiveness of perception doubtless characterizes all

great poets. Keats is supposed to have had more of this power, because he lacked other and equally important powers or because it obtained over them such a mastery. . . . The confounding of fine sensations with moral sense, the pleasurable with the right, is a great defect of Keats's poetry.

"The most obvious characteristic of Keats's poetry is certainly its abundant sensuousness. Some of his finest little poems are all but literally lyrics of the sensuous, embodiments of the feelings of ennui, fatigue, physical languor, and the like, in tissues of fancied circumstances and sensation. . . . In following him in these luxurious excursions into a world of ideal nature and life, we see his imagination winging about, as if it were his disembodied senses hovering insect-like in one humming group, all keeping together in harmony at the bidding of a higher intellectual power and yet each catering for itself in that species of circumstance which is its peculiar food. . . . I believe that one of the most remarkable characteristics of Keats is the universality of his sensuousness."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"At the foundation of the character of Keats lay an extraordinary keenness of all the bodily sensibilities and the mental sensibilities which depend upon them. He led, in great part, a life of passive sensation, of pleasure and pain through the senses. . . . He possessed, in short, simply in virtue of his organization, a rich intellectual foundation of that kind which consists of notions furnished directly by sensations and of a corresponding stock of names and terms. Even had he remained without education, his natural vocabulary of words for all the varieties of thrills, tastes, odors, sounds, colors, and tactual perceptions, would have been unusually precise and extensive. As it was, this native capacity for keen and abundant sensation was developed, educated, and harmonized by the influences of reading, intellectual conversation, and more or less laborious thought, into that richer and more cultivated sensuousness, which, under the name of sensi-

bility to natural beauty, is an accepted requisite in the constitution of painters and poets."—*David Masson*.

"Sensuous Keats was, as every poet whose inspiration is direct from heaven should be. . . . Quick susceptibility to sensuous impressions of every kind may be plentifully illustrated by opening almost at random in his works. . . . The extraordinary beauty and facility of his descriptions of sensation and his addiction to climax and point in his prose have made it easy to quote phrases which seem to show that he was unduly attached to delights of mere sense."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"Somewhat too sensually sensitive he may have been, but the nature of the man was, as far as was the quality of the poet, above the pitiful level of a creature whose soul could let itself be snuffed out by an article."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"‘The Eve of St. Agnes,’ pure and passionate, surprising by its fine excess of color and melody, sensuous in every line, yet free from the slightest taint of sensuality, is unforgettable and unsurpassable as the dream of first love."—*Henry Van Dyke*.

"Viewing all these, . . . the predominant quality which we trace in them [his poems] is an extreme susceptibility to delight. . . . The emotion throughout is the emotion of beauty: beauty intensely perceived, intensely loved. . . . He was a man of perception rather than of contemplation or speculation. . . . He saw so far and so keenly into the sensuous as to be penetrated with the sentiment which, to a healthy and large nature, is its inseparable outcome. . . . If the sensuous was his atmosphere, the breathing apparatus with which he respired it was sentiment. The susceptibility is visible in his poems to all forms of beauty and delight."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"Keats was sensuous, . . . but the richness of his diction carries with it the impression of immense intellectual resource. . . . He was no idle singer of sensuous

moods, he was a resolute and clear-sighted pursuer of the Ideal. . . . In that sensuousness lay the promise of a prime which, had it come, might have recalled the noontide of Spenser and Shakespeare."—*H. W. Mabie*.

"His sensibility, sharpened by mortal illness, tended to a morbid excess. . . . Extreme sensibility struggled in him with a great understanding."—*Leigh Hunt*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"O known Unknown, from whom my being sips  
Such darling essence, wherefore may I not  
Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot  
Pillow my chin forever? ever press  
These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?  
Why not forever and forever feel  
That breath about my eyes?"—*Endymion*.

"Give me a golden pen, and let me lean  
On heap'd up flowers, in regions clear and far;  
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,  
Or hand of hymning angel, when 'tis seen  
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:  
And let there glide, by many a pearly car,  
Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond jar,  
And half-discovered wings, and glances keen.  
The while let music wander round my ears;  
And as it reaches each delicious ending,  
Let me write down a line of glorious tone,  
And full of many wonders of the spheres:  
For what a height my spirit is contending!  
'Tis not content so soon to be alone."—*Sonnet*.

"Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue;  
Let the rose grow intense and warm the air,  
And let the clouds of even and of morn  
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;

Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipped shells,  
On sands or in great deeps, vermillion turn  
Through all the labyrinths."—*Endymion*.

**9. Melody—Felicity of Expression.**—"Keats had an instinct for fine words, which are in themselves pictures and ideas, and had more of the power of poetic expression than any [other] modern English poet. . . . Thought emancipated itself from expression without becoming its tyrant ; and music and meaning floated together, accordant as swan and shadow, on the smooth element of his verse."—*Lowell*.

"No one else in poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"His work ['Endymion'] lives not by reason of its perfect structure, but by reason of its overflowing beauty of poetic thought and diction. . . . It is enough that, except Shakespeare, no English poet has found such color in our speech, has made it linger in the ear in phrase so rich and full."—*H. W. Mabie*.

"The faultless force and the profound subtlety of his deep and cunning instinct for absolute natural beauty can hardly be questioned or overlooked ; and this is doubtless the one main distinctive gift or power which denotes him as a poet among all his equals, and gives right to rank forever beside Coleridge and Shelley."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"A casual survey will discover felicitous touches of description, enough to indicate to any candid mind how full of poetry was the soul of Keats. He speaks of the 'patient brilliance of the moon' and 'the quaint mossiness of aged roots.' Whoso feels not the force of such words will look in vain for the poetic either in life or literature."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.



"He brooded over fine phrases like a lover, and often when he met a quaint or delicious word he would take pains to make it his own by using it as speedily as possible in some poem he was writing."—*David Masson*.

"Perhaps there is no poet, living or dead, except Shakespeare, who can pretend to anything like the felicity of epithet which characterizes Keats. One word or phrase is the essence of a whole description or sentiment. It is like the dull substance of the earth struck through by electric fires and converted into veins of gold and diamonds."—*William Howitt*.

"Keats came gradually to perceive the analogy between painting and poetry latent in the picturesque associations of individual words."—*W. J. Courthope*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Shed no tears! Oh shed no tears!  
 The flower will bloom another year.  
 Weep no more! Oh weep no more!  
 Young buds sleep in the root's white core.  
 Dry your eyes! Oh dry your eyes!  
 For I was taught in Paradise  
 To ease my breast of melodies.  
 Shed no tears!"—*Faery Song*.

"To Sorrow  
 I bade good morrow,  
 And thought to leave her far away behind;  
 But cheerly, cheerly,  
 She loves me dearly;  
 She is so constant to me, and so kind:  
 I would deceive her,  
 And so leave her,  
 But ah! she is so constant and so kind."

—*Endymion*.

" 'Tis the witching hour of night,  
Orbèd is the moon and bright,  
And the stars they glisten, glisten,  
Seeming with bright eyes to listen—  
    For what listen they?  
For a song and for a charm,  
See they glisten in alarm,  
And the moon is waxing warm  
    To hear what I shall say.  
Moon ! keep wide thy golden ears—  
Hearken stars ! and hearken, spheres !  
Hearken, thou eternal sky !  
I sing an infant's lullaby,  
    A pretty lullaby.  
Listen, listen, listen, listen,  
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,  
    And hear my lullaby !"—*A Prophecy.*

## SHELLEY, 1792-1822

**Biographical Outline.**—Percy Bysshe Shelley, born at Field Place, Warnham, near Horsham, August 4, 1792; father a man of means and gentle birth, afterward a baronet; Shelley is first instructed by a clergyman tutor, and at the age of ten is placed in Sion House Academy, near Brentford; being a sensitive child, the persecutions endured from his school-fellows inspire him with that hatred of oppression and that spirit of resistance which marked all his after-life, while the smattering of scientific knowledge that he obtains at Brentford awakens in him a passionate thirst to know the secrets of nature; at twelve he enters Eton, where he repeats the experiences of persecution at Brentford, only in an aggravated form, and where he again seeks relief from the torture of his fellows in scientific research; he is known at Eton as "Shelley, the Atheist," and is accused of "cursing his father and the King;" while at Eton he makes good progress in the classics, and imbibes from a reading of the first two books of Pliny's "Natural History" that pantheism which marked his religious theories ever afterward; in his sixteenth year he writes and publishes his romance "Zastrozzi," being an imitation of the style of Mrs. Radcliffe; in 1810 he publishes another romance, entitled "St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian," and soon afterward collaborates with his cousin, Thomas Medwin, in writing a poem, which they call "The Wandering Jew;" this poem was eventually published in *Fraser's Magazine*; in 1810 Shelley publishes also a volume entitled "Poems by Victor and Cazire," a part of which was written either by his sister Elizabeth or by his cousin, Harriet Grove, to whom he thought himself attached; Shelley soon

withdrew this volume, on learning that his coadjutor had cribbed wholesale from Matthew Gregory Lewis.

He enters University College, Oxford, April 10th, and soon afterward forms a friendship with Thomas Jefferson Hogg, a youth of sarcastic humor, who had great influence over Shelley all the rest of his life, and who encouraged him in his natural aggressiveness against established authority ; in 1810 Shelley and Hogg circulate a pamphlet of burlesque verses, purporting to have been written by Margaret Nicholson, an insane woman who had tried to kill the King ; soon afterward Shelley submits to the bishops and heads of colleges a syllabus of the arguments supposed to demonstrate " the necessity of atheism ; " on March 25, 1811, he is summoned before the college authorities, and, on his refusal to answer their questions, is handed a sentence of expulsion, which had been previously signed and sealed ; Hogg protests against the injustice to his friend, and is himself expelled in consequence.

Being excluded, also, from his own home, Shelley takes lodgings in London at 15 Poland Street, and frequents the hospitals with the idea of eventually becoming a physician ; while in London he renews a slight acquaintance already formed with Harriet Westbrook, the fifteen-year-old daughter of a retired hotel-keeper, and also a school-friend of Shelley's sister ; Miss Westbrook fancies herself persecuted at home, and Shelley sympathizes and tries to interfere in her behalf ; before his expulsion from Oxford he had been refused by his cousin, Harriet Grove, and when he is recalled to London from his summer vacation of 1811 by letters from Harriet Westbrook, imploring his assistance, influenced by compassion and pique, he elopes with her to Edinburgh, where they are married August 28, 1811 ; during the winter of 1811-12 Shelley resides at Keswick, where Southey receives him kindly, and here he opens his correspondence with Godwin, whose work on " Political Justice " had influenced the poet profoundly ; inspired by Godwin's principles, Shelley leaves Keswick in

February, 1812, on a quixotic expedition to redress the wrongs of Ireland; he makes several public addresses in Ireland, publishes "An Address to the Irish People," and in April departs for Wales, leaving Irish matters much as he found them; about this time he becomes a vegetarian, and he generally follows this kind of diet so long as he is in England; he spends the early summer of 1812 at Cwm Elan, and later settles at Lynmouth in North Devon, where he publishes a powerful remonstrance against the condemnation of one Eaton for publishing the third part of Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason."

During 1812 Shelley excites the attention of the Government by sending to sea in boxes and bottles a "Declaration of Rights" and a poem entitled "The Devil's Walk;" until after the excitement thus caused had passed, he secludes himself at Tanyralt, near Tremadoc, in North Wales; while there he becomes so interested in an important public engineering work (a sea-wall) that he goes to London to raise money for the prosecution of the work; while in London he meets Godwin; he leaves Tanyralt in February, 1813, and settles in Ireland, near Killarney, till the following June, when he goes with his wife to London, where their first child, Ianthe, is born June 28, 1813; in July Shelley takes a house in Bracknell, in Berkshire, near Windsor Forest; about this time his "Queen Mab," apparently written in 1812, is published with an appendix of irrelevant matter consisting of notes on "natural diet;" the poem remained unknown till 1821, when a pirated reproduction, which Shelley tried in vain to suppress, won the fame so long denied to the original; early in 1814 he publishes an ironical "Refutation of Deism;" during 1814 begins his estrangement from his wife, which was due primarily to "a radical incompatibility of temperament," although as late as March 23, 1814, he secures her legal status by strengthening the original Scotch marriage ceremony with a re-marriage under the rites of the

Church of England; while he is gradually becoming estranged and is being attracted by Mary Godwin, Mrs. Shelley leaves her home for her father's house at Bath.

On July 28, 1814, Shelley leaves England with Mary Godwin, taking with them Jane Clairmont, daughter of Mary Godwin's step-mother and afterward notorious as one of Byron's mistresses; the party travel through France to Switzerland, where Shelley writes to Harriet, proposing that she join them; he is soon obliged to return to England, however, by the failure to receive expected remittances; the details of this escapade were afterward recorded by Shelley in a short monologue entitled "The History of a Six Weeks' Tour;" later in 1814 Shelley's wife gives birth to a son, and his financial supplies are cut off by the mutual hostilities of the Shelleys, the Westbrooks, and the Godwins; on the death of Shelley's grandfather, early in 1815, the poet's father settles on him an annuity of £1,000 a year, and he, in turn, gives to Harriet £200 a year; after a tour of southern England, he settles for a time in a house at Bishopsgate, near Windsor Forest, where he recovers from a threatened attack of tuberculosis, and where the solitude inspires his first really worthy poem, "Alastor, the Spirit of Solitude," published in 1816 with several of Shelley's minor poems; during the winter of 1815-16 he adds much to his mental culture by the study of Greek literature with his friend Hogg and Thomas Love Peacock, whom Shelley had met through his publisher, Hookham; in January, 1816, a son is born to Shelley and Mary Godwin; he now gives up his feverish desire for political agitation, develops more tranquillity of soul, and becomes content to influence society through his writings; about this time he probably wrote his beautiful prose "Essay on Christianity," not published till 1859—after his death—a production that exhibits a great change in the poet's views and religious attitude since the wild days of "Queen Mab."

In May, 1816, he makes a hasty flight into Switzerland, in

company with his wife and Jane, or Claire, Clairmont, doubtless to escape the importunities of Godwin for further loans in addition to large sums that Shelley had already given him; in Switzerland they meet Byron, who now calls Shelley "the most gentle, the most amiable, and the least worldly-minded person I have ever met;" while they are in Switzerland with Byron Shelley visits Mont Blanc, and Mary Godwin partly composes her novel "Frankenstein;" returning to England in the autumn of 1816, Shelley settles temporarily at Bath; here they are deeply affected by the death of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Godwin's half-sister, and by the suicidal drowning of Harriet Shelley, on December 10, 1816, in the Serpentine, Hyde Park, London; Shelley's marriage with Mary Godwin is legally sanctioned December 30, 1816, and he attempts to gain possession of his two children by Harriet through an appeal to the Court of Chancery, but a decision given by Lord Eldon, March 27, 1817, denies his appeal; early in 1817 he publishes, anonymously, his "Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote Throughout the Kingdom" and later in the same year his "Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte;" in September, 1817, a daughter is born to Shelley and Mary Godwin, and his family is further increased by the coming of Claire Clairmont and her child by Byron; among his neighbors at Bath is Leigh Hunt, who had been most kind to Shelley during the miseries of the previous winter, and whom Shelley repaid later with a gift of £1,400, much more than was consistent with the claims of nearer kindred upon Shelley; through Hunt he meets Keats, though their acquaintance never became intimate; a renewal of importunities by Godwin for further financial aid now completely estranges him from Shelley; during 1817 the poet writes, in six months, "The Revolt of Islam," which is published in London in 1818; this poem was written partly on a seat in Bisham wood and partly in a boat among the islets of the Thames; it is bitterly attacked in the *Quarterly Review*, and is highly

praised by Professor Wilson ("Christopher North"), writing under the influence of De Quincey, but is otherwise unnoticed; during 1817 Shelley also gives much time to relieving the distress of his cottager neighbors at Bath, and writes more political tracts, using the pseudonym "The Hermit of Marlow."

He again leaves England March 11, 1818, reaches Turin March 21st, and remains in Italy thereafter till his death; he spends the spring of 1818 at Genoa and Milan and the summer at the baths of Lucca, where he translates Plato's "Symposium" and completes "Rosalind and Helen;" he goes thence to Venice, to deliver to Byron his daughter by Claire Clairmont; at Venice Shelley's own daughter Clara dies, and he resides for a time at Este in a villa lent him by Byron; here he begins "Prometheus Unbound," and writes "Lines on the Euganean Hills," which was published in the following year, with a few other poems; he also writes "Julian and Maddalo" about this time; in November, 1818, he starts for Rome, and while on the journey begins his series of incomparable letters to Peacock—letters that place him, in the opinion of Leslie Stephen, "at the head of English letter-writers."

Shelley spends the month of December, 1818, at Naples, where he writes "Lines Written in Dejection;" returning to Rome, he remains till June, 1819, when the death of his son William causes him to remove to Leghorn and thence to Florence; here his third son, afterward Sir Percy Bysshe Shelley, was born; in November, 1819, after finishing "Prometheus Unbound," Shelley begins "The Cenci," based on the tragedy of Beatrice Cenci, whose face had fascinated him in the reputed portrait by Guido in the Colonna palace at Rome; both "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Cenci" are published in 1819-20; while at Florence, in October, 1819, Shelley writes the "Ode to the West Wind" (his noblest lyric), his parody, "Peter Bell the Third," and "The Masque of Anarchy" (provoked by the Manchester massacre of Au-



gust, 1819; "Peter Bell the Third" was not published till 1839; late in 1819 the poet removes to Pisa, which is his home, mainly, during the rest of his life; at Pisa, in July, 1820, he writes his "Epistle to Maria Gisborne" (growing out of a premature project of Shelley and his friend Gisborne for a steamboat line between Genoa and Leghorn); during 1820 he writes "The Witch of Atlas" and his anonymous burlesque tragedy, "Swellfoot the Tyrant," based on Queen Caroline's trial and withdrawn from publication because the Society for the Prevention of Vice threatened to prosecute the author; during the same year he writes also "The Sensitive Plant" and "The Skylark," and completes "Epipsychidion;" "Epipsychidion" was partly based on the story of an Italian lady, Emilia Viviani, who had been imprisoned in a convent to compel her to an obnoxious marriage, and whom Shelley met when the "Epipsychidion" had been begun but thrown aside; the poem was published in London in 1821; while writing "Epipsychidion" Shelley writes also his masterly "Defence of Poetry," being an answer to an argument by Peacock; two additional parts of the "Defence of Poetry" were planned but never written, and the first part was not published till Shelley's prose writings appeared, in 1840, after his death.

In 1821, on the death of Keats, Shelley writes and publishes at Pisa his "Adonais;" during this year he visits Byron at Ravenna and makes arrangements for him to remove to Pisa; in the autumn of 1821 the news of the Greek insurrection inspires Shelley's "Hellas," which is published in London in 1822; during 1822 he begins his tragedy on Charles I., and makes translations from "Faust" and from Calderon's "*Magico Prodigioso*;" in April, 1822, the Shelleys remove to Lerici, near Spezzia, and soon afterward he writes there his "Triumph of Life;" on the arrival at Pisa of Leigh Hunt and his apparently dying wife, in May, 1822, Shelley hastens thither and aids Byron in making them as comfortable as pos-

sible ; he sets sail from Leghorn for Spezzia, July 8, 1822, in company with his friend and neighbor, Edward E. Williams, but the vessel is caught in a squall and all on board are drowned ; on the 18th of July Shelley's body, recognized by the volumes of Sophocles and Keats in the coat-pockets, was washed ashore near Viareggio ; it was at first buried in the sand, but on the 16th of August following, in the presence of Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Trelawney, it was cremated, and the ashes were interred in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, December 17, 1822 ; his heart, which would not burn, was snatched from the flames by Trelawney, was given to Mrs. Shelley, and is still in the possession of the family ; in 1823 was published a volume entitled " Poetical Pieces " containing " Prometheus Unbound," " Hellas," " The Cenci," " Rosalind and Helen," and other poems ; in 1824 " Julian and Maddalo " and " The Witch of Atlas," hitherto unpublished, appeared in a volume together with the unpublished " Triumph of Life," the " Epistle to Maria Gisborne," and many minor lyrics and translations, the whole entitled " Posthumous Poems ;" the cost of this publication was borne by the poets B. W. Procter and T. L. Beddoes and by Beddoe's future biographer, T. Kelsall ; this volume was almost immediately withdrawn by an agreement with the poet's father, Sir Timothy Shelley, and for several years Shelley's poems appeared only in pirated editions, as the courts had refused to protect " Queen Mab " with copyright ; in 1839 Mrs. Shelley published an authentic edition of her husband's poems in four volumes, including some lyrics till then in manuscript.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

✓ **I. Mysticism—Subtlety—Idealism.**—"His descriptions are often strangely unreal. They seem to be enveloped in a hazy, wavering atmosphere, as if they were not actual scenes but the combinations of a remembered dream. One does not look upon them as he looks upon living nature when he stands face to face with her beauty; but they are seen through a gauzy medium of memory, like places which may have impressed the mind in the earliest period of its consciousness. . . . Words were often used by him not in their common or obvious meaning but in a sense derived from remote and complicated relations. . . . A great fault of Shelley's poetry is the obscurity of which so many readers complain. . . . A frequent cause of his obscurity is the excessive subtlety and refinement of his imagination."—*Purke Godwin*.

"Shelley was a poetical mystic, but a poetical mystic of a very unique kind. . . . Shelley's poetical mysticism is, in the quick throb of its pulses, in the flush and glow of its

hectic beauty and the thrill of its exquisite anguish and equally exquisite delirium of imagined bliss, essentially and to the last the mysticism of intellectual youth. . . . Shelley's idealism betrays its genuineness in the sorrowful wail, the even hoarsely discordant note, which frequently sings through it. . . . He is an idealist to the heart's core. . . . There was no inherent strength in his conception of beauty. He abstracted it from the world instead of impressing it or imposing it on the world. . . . His mysticism arises quite as much from his refusal to acknowledge the world beyond as from his reluctance to meddle with the coarse details on this side of his chosen sphere. . . . The result of his idealism, as of all such idealism, was that he nowhere found any true rest for his spirit, since he never came upon any free and immutable will on which to lean. . . . The practical centre or focus of his meaning lies concealed in his own heart, while all that he pictures for us is the secondary effect exerted upon himself without the causes which produced it. . . . There are no poems which seem more hazy to our age than his political and religious dreams."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"Watching the yellow bees in the ivy bloom and the reflected pine forest in the water pools, watching the sunset as it faded and the dawn as it fired, and weaving all fair and fleeting things into a tissue where light and music were at one—that was the task of Shelley."—*Andrew Lang*.

"His poetry is like the subtle veil woven by the witch of Atlas from threads of fleecy mists, long lines of light such as are kindled by the dawn and star-beams. When he speaks of natural scenery the solid earth seems to be dissolved and we are in presence of nothing but the shifting phantasmagoria of cloudland, the glow of moonlight on eternal snow or the golden lightning of the setting sun."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"His poetry is, in fact, a kind of air-hung mythology, shadowing forth the essential principles of a creed which might be called Shelleyism."—*David Masson*.

"His sphere is the unconditioned; he floats away into an imaginary Elysium or an unexpected Utopia; beautiful and excellent of course, but having nothing in common with the absolute laws of the present world. . . . Living a good deal in, and writing a good deal about, the abstract world, it was inevitable that he should often deal in fine subtleties, affecting very little the concrete hearts of real men. . . . Many pages of his are in consequence nearly unintelligible, even to good critics of common poetry. . . . His intellect did not tend to the strong grasp of realities: its taste was rather for the subtle refining of theories, the distilling of exquisite abstractions."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"In 'Epipsychidion' the very mood of mind tends towards the intangible; while the frame-work of imagery or symbol remains to this day an enigma to the students of the poetry and life of Shelley. . . . But Shelley, like Zeus, was a cloud-compeller; and of his clouds even the most vaporous refuses to disperse."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"His aim is rather to render the effect of the thing than the thing itself; the soul and spirit of life rather than the living form, the growth rather than the thing grown."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"Shelley's ideal nature modified his religious sentiment. . . . He was too fond of looking beyond the obvious and the tangible to form a merely descriptive poet and too metaphysical in his taste to be a purely sentimental one. In general, the scope of his poems is abstract, abounding in wonderful displays of fancy and allegorical invention."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"We move in Shelley's world between heaven and earth, in abstraction, in dreamland, symbolism: the beings float in it like those fantastic figures which we see in the clouds, and which alternately undulate and change form capriciously, in their robes of snow and gold."—*Taine*.

"His whole conception of life is bounded only by illusions."—*Edmund Gosse*.

“ For my part, I feel that some of the visions which Shelley’s poetry conjures up as I read it are but the phantoms, showing thin and ghost-like, indeed, when I turn from them to the men and women of Shakespeare’s plays or Scott’s novels. He is in endless pursuit of unattainable ideals, ever at the heels of the flying perfect.”—*Edward Dowden*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ There was a Being whom my spirit oft  
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,  
In the clear golden prime of my youth’s dawn,  
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
Amid the enchanted mountains and the caves  
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves  
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
Paved her light steps. On an imagined shore,  
Under the gray beak of some promontory,  
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory  
That I beheld her not.”—*Epipsychidion*.

“ A portal as of shadowy adamant  
Stands yawning on the highway of the life  
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt.  
Around it rages an unceasing strife  
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt  
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high  
Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

‘And many pass it by with careless tread,  
Not knowing that a shadowy . . .  
Tracks every traveller even to where the dead  
Wait peacefully for their companion new.  
But others, by more curious humor led,  
Pause to examine : these are very few,  
And they learn little there, except to know  
That shadows follow them where’er they go.”

—*An Allegory*.



“ There late was one within whose subtle being,  
 As light and wind within some delicate cloud  
 That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,  
 Genius and death contended. None may know  
 The sweetness of the joy which made his breath  
 Fail like the trances of the summer air,  
 When, with the lady of his love, who then  
 First knew the unreserve of mingled being,  
 He walked along the pathway of a field,  
 Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,  
 But to the west was open to the sky.”—*The Sunset.*

2. **Lyrical Rapture.**—“ The unique rapture of Shelley's lyrical cry of dread, of desire, of despair, is his distinguishing feature as a poet. . . . Other lyrical poets write of what they feel, Shelley of what he wants to feel. . . . It is in such bursts of song as the ‘Song of the Sixth Spirit,’ or the song ‘Life of Life thy Lips Enkindle’ that we find lyrics which seem fuller of spiritual fire than any other English poet has poured into our language. On the whole, he seems to have failed in working out any complex conception, while his passion is at once more aerial and more sweet than that of any other English poet.”—*R. H. Hutton.*

“ Single thrills of rapture, which are insufficient to make long poems out of, supply the very inspiration for the true lyric. It is the predominance of emotion, so unhappy to himself, which made Shelley the lyrist that he was. When he sings his lyric strains, whatever is least pleasing in him is softened down, if it does not wholly disappear. Whatever is most unique and excellent in him comes out at its best—his eye for abstract beauty, the subtlety of his thought, the rush of his eager pursuing desire, the splendor of his imagery, the delicate rhythm, the matchless music.”—*J. C. Shairp.*

“ Shelley outsang all poets on record but some two or three throughout all time : his depths and heights of inner and outer music are as divine as Nature's and not sooner exhausti-

ble. He was the perfect singing-god ; his thoughts, words, deeds, all sang together."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"The very isolation and suddenness of impulse which rendered him unfit for the composition of great works rendered him peculiarly fit to pour forth on a sudden the intense essence of a peculiar feeling in profuse strains of unpremeditated art."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"The soul of aspiring youth, untrammelled by canons of taste and untamed by schoolboy discipline, swells into rapture at his lyric sweetness, finds ambrosial refreshment from his plenteous fancies, catches fire at his daring thought."—*Margaret Fuller Ossoli*.

"Morbid his visions may have been ; but in no modern poet, Byron excepted, is the purely lyric spirit so clear-tuned and melodious as in the author of 'Alastor.'"—*Austin Dobson*.

"Indeed, the lyrical parts of the drama [ 'Prometheus Unbound' ] are only surpassed in graceful ease and harmony by Sophocles. They rise upon the ear, strains of sweet melody, ravishing it with delight, and leaving, after they have passed away, the sense of a keen but dreamy ecstasy."—*Parke Godwin*.

"With elevation of meaning, and splendor and beauty of perception, he combined the most searching, the most inimitable loveliness of verse-music."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"In none of Shelley's contemporaries was the lyrical faculty so paramount ; and whether we consider his minor songs, his odes, or his more complicated choral dramas, we acknowledge that he was the loftiest and the most spontaneous singer of our language. . . . The poem 'Hellas' is distinguished by passages of great lyrical beauty, rising at times to the sublimest raptures and closing to the half-pathetic cadence of that well-known Chorus 'The world's great age begins anew.' . . . The lyric movement of the Chorus from 'Hellas' . . . marks the highest point of Shelley's rhythmic invention."—*John Addington Symonds*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Teach us, sprite or bird,  
 What sweet thoughts are thine :  
 I have never heard  
 Praise of love or wine  
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.  
 . . . . .  
 Waking or asleep,  
 Thou of death must deem  
 Things more true and deep  
 Than we mortals dream.  
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ?

We look before and after,  
 And pine for what is not :  
 Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught ;  
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.”  
*—To a Skylark.*

“ Spirit of Nature ! thou  
 Life of interminable multitudes ;  
 Soul of those mighty spheres  
 Whose changeless paths through heaven's deep silence lie ;  
 Soul of that smallest being  
 The dwelling of whose life  
 Is one faint April sun-gleam ;  
 Man, like these passive things,  
 Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth :  
 Like theirs, his age of endless peace,  
 Which time is fast maturing,  
 Will swiftly, surely, come ;  
 And the unbounded frame which thou pervadest  
 Will be without a flaw  
 Marring its perfect symmetry.”—*Queen Mab.*

“ Worlds on worlds are rolling ever  
 From creation to decay,  
 Like the bubbles on a river,  
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away.

But they are still immortal  
 Who, through birth's orient portal  
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,  
 Clothe their unceasing flight  
 In the brief dust and light  
 Gathered around their chariots as they go :  
 New shapes they still may weave,  
 New gods, new laws receive :  
 Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last  
 On Death's bare ribs had cast."—*Hellas*.

### ✓ 3. Intellectual Desire — Thirst — Yearning .—

"Shelley was essentially the poet of intellectual desire, not of all emotion. The thrill of some fugitive feeling, which he is either vainly pursuing or which has just slipped through his faint intellectual grasp, gives the key-note to every one of his finest poems. . . . His 'Skylark' is a symbol of illimitable thirst drinking illimitable sweetness, an image of that rapture which no man can ever reach, because it soars so far from earth, because it is ever rising with unflagging wing, despising old delights. . . . The eager-souled poet of unsatisfied desire—always thirsting, always yearning; never pouring forth the strains of a thankful satisfaction but either the cravings of an expectant rapture or the agony of a severed nerve. . . . If we look at any of the lyrics on which he has set the full stamp of his genius, we find that it images one of these two attitudes of intellect—the keen exquisite sense of want gazing wildly forward or wildly backward but vainly striving to close on something which eludes its grasp—that is the burden of every song. Whether forward or backward gazing, the attitude of unsatisfied desire is always the same, distinguishing Shelley from the many great contemporaries. He cannot be satisfied without a thrill of his whole soul. In that constant yearning which he felt for a tingling thrill of new intellectual life, there was at times, as there is in all profound love of excitement, a jarring which is ever reflected in

his general demeanor. . . . His poetry is the poetry of désiré. He is ever the *homo desideriorum*; always thirsting, always yearning."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"Another passion, which no man has ever felt more strongly than Shelley—the desire to penetrate the mysteries of existence—is depicted in 'Alastor.' He had, in perhaps an unequalled and unfortunate measure, the famine of intellect—the daily insatiable craving after the highest truth, which is the passion of 'Alastor.'"—*Walter Bagehot*.

"The soul of aspiring youth catches fire at his daring thought, and melts into boundless weeping at his tender sadness—the sadness of a soul betrothed to an ideal unattainable in this present sphere."—*Margaret Fuller Ossoli*.

"We are touched through his poetry with a certain divine discontent, so that not music nor sculpture nor picture nor song can wholly satisfy our spirits; but in and through these we reach after some higher beauty, some divine goodness, which we may not attain yet toward which we must perpetually aspire."—*Edward Dowden*.

"The object which he longed for was some abstract intellectualized spirit of beauty and loveliness, which should thrill his spirit unceasingly with delicious shocks of emotion. This yearning, panting desire is expressed by him in a thousand forms and figures throughout his poetry. It was not mere sensuous enjoyment that he sought but keen intellectual and emotional delight—the mental thrill, the glow of soul, the tingling of the nerves, that accompany transcendental rapture."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"This persistent upward striving, this earnestness, this passionate intensity, this piety of soul and purity of inspiration, give a quite unique spirituality to his poems."—*John Addington Symonds*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Rarely, rarely, comest thou,  
 Spirit of Delight !  
 Wherefore hast thou left me now  
 Many a day and night ?  
 Many a weary night and day  
 'Tis since thou art fled away.”—*To a Skylark.*

“ Where art thou, beloved To-morrow ?  
 When, young and old, strong and weak,  
 Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,  
 Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,  
 In thy place—ah well-a-day !—  
 We find the thing we fled—To-day.”  
 —*To-Morrow.*

“ I pant for the music which is divine ;  
 My heart in its thirst is a dying power.  
 Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine ;  
 Loosen the notes in a silver shower.  
 Like a herbless plain for the gentle rain,  
 I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound  
 More, oh more !—I am thirsting yet !  
 It loosens the serpent which care has bound  
 Upon my heart, to stifle it ;  
 The dissolving strain, through every vein,  
 Passes into my heart and brain.”—*Music.*

4. **Awelessness—Curiosity—Irreverence.**—“ Shelley's awelessness of nature—‘curiosity,’ as Hazlitt calls it—is only the result of the limitless longing with which he seeks to tear the veil from almost any secret, human or divine ; and yet not in the spirit of a thirst for new truth so much as a thirst for a new effervescence of nature half-way between knowledge and feeling. This characteristic in Shelley is an

exceedingly different thing from that species of scoffing wit in which Byron attained such pre-eminence, and which consists in insolent daring displayed wantonly before the face of a mysterious or sacred Power, without ever caring to penetrate the secret of the mystery. Shelley's intellect was far subtler than Byron's, and betrayed no fascination for mere acts of intellectual impertinence. Byron was a grown-up school-boy, with a keen pleasure in playing practical jokes on mighty Powers in which he half believed. Shelley crept up to them with an irresistible longing to peep under the veil and feel a new thrill vibrate through his nature. . . . I must admit that Shelley's mind resembles that of the Greeks in not being clothed with that 'instructive mutual awe' which Plato makes, in his Protagoras, the natural protection of all human society. . . . That eager mind rushing breathlessly along the track of imaginative desire, would have needed much to convince it that any precincts were inviolable."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"Before nothing would his soul bow down. Every veil, however sacred, he would rend, pierce the inner shrine of being, and force it to give up its secret. There is in him a profane audacity, an utter awelessness. Reverence to him was another word for hated superstition. . . . Nothing was to him inviolate; all the natural reserves he would break down."—*J. C. Shairp.*

"Curiosity is the only proper category of his mind; and though a man in knowledge, he is a child in feeling."—*Walter Bagehot.*

"Shelley's nature was peculiarly reverential, but he entertained certain speculative doubts. Veneration was his predominant sentiment. Speculatively he may have been an atheist; in his inmost soul he was a Christian."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"If that reverence which was far from wanting in his nature had been only presented in the person of some guide to his spiritual being, with an object worthy of its homage and

trust, it is probable that the yet free and noble result of Shelley's individuality would have been presented to the world in a form which, while it attracted only a few, would not have repelled the many."—*George MacDonald*.

"Shelley contributed a new quality to English Literature—a quality of ideality, freedom, and spiritual audacity, which severe critics of other nations think we lack."—*J. A. Symonds*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"And this is Hell : and in this smother  
All are damnable and damned;  
Each one, damning, damns the other;  
They are damned by one another,—  
By none other are they damned.

'Tis a lie to say ' God damns.'  
Where was Heaven's Attorney General  
When they first gave out such flams?  
Let there be an end of shams:  
They are mines of poisonous mineral."

—*Peter Bell the Third*.

"The name of God  
Has fenced about all crime with holiness;  
Himself the creature of his worshippers;  
Whose names and attributes and passions change—  
Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord—  
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,  
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world  
For desolation's watchword: whether hosts  
Stain his death-blushing chariot-wheels, as on  
Triumphantly they roll whilst Brahmins raise  
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans."

—*Queen Mab*.

"Once, early in the morning,  
Beelzebub arose:  
With care his sweet person adorning,  
He put on his Sunday clothes.

. . . . .



" And then to St. James's Court he went,  
 And St. Paul's Church he took on his way;  
 He was mighty thick with every saint,  
 Though they were formal and he was gay.

. . . . .  
 A priest at whose elbow the Devil during prayer  
 Sate, familiarly, side by side,  
 Declared that, if the tempter were there,  
 His presence he would not abide.

' Ah ah ! ' thought old Nick, ' that's a very stale trick ;  
 For without the Devil, O favorite of evil,  
 In your carriage you would not ride.' "

—*The Devil's Walk.*

**5. Acute Sensibility—Sympathy.**—" Shelley was endowed by nature with a sensibility acutely alive to the most fleeting shades of joy and pain—warm, full, and unselfish in its love, deep-toned and mighty in its indignation. This fiery spiritual essence was enclosed in a frame sensitive enough to be its fit embodiment. No reader of Shelley can be ignorant that some of the most beautiful exhibitions of the tenderest and simplest affections of the heart are to be found in his writings ; that he had an ear exquisitely tuned to catch the still sad music of humanity, that human hopes and fears and loves all woke sympathetic echoes in his heart ; that the language of human passions kindles and burns along his creations, often with a might and freedom almost Shakesperian."

—*E. P. Whipple.*

" His appropriate sphere is what I may call swift sensibility, the intersecting line between the sensuous and the intellectual or moral. Mere sensation is too literal for him, mere feeling too blind and dumb, thought too cold ; but in the line where sensation and feeling are just passing into thought . . . his great power lay."—*R. H. Hutton.*

" I thought of Shelley—so we all think of him—as a man of extraordinary sensitiveness and susceptibility, susceptibility, above all, to ideal impressions. . . . Shelley's pri-

vate happiness did not dull his sensibility to the wrongs of the world. . . . Shelley's sympathetic delight in the innocent joy of children and all happy creatures did not hinder or check a passion of charity for those who were sufferers, brethren of his own in sorrow, sickness, and need."—*Edward Dowden*.

"Shelley's sensibility was vivid but peculiar. . . . The nerves of Shelley quivered at the idea of loveliness; but no coarse sensation obtruded particular objects upon him."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"Shelley seems to us an incarnation of what was sought in the sympathies and desires of instructive life, a light of dawn and a foreshadowing of the weather of his day."—*Margaret Fuller Ossoli*.

"It is easy to perceive throughout ['Queen Mab'] that the writer's ungovernable sensibilities ran away with his other faculties."—*Parke Godwin*.

"He had the lawlessness of the man with the sensibility of the woman."—*Charles Kingsley*.

"Nonconformity of tastes might easily arise between two parties without much blame to either when one of the two had received from nature an intellect and a temperament so dangerously eccentric, and constitutionally carried, by delicacy so exquisite of organization, to eternal restlessness and irritability of nerves, if not absolutely at times to lunacy."—*De Quincey*.

"His poem ['The Sensitive Plant'], the story of a plant, is also the story of a soul—Shelley's soul, the sensitive."—*Taine*.

"In this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation I am formed, if for anything now in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend remote and minute distinctions of feelings, whether relative to the external nature or to the living beings which surround us."—*Shelley*.

"To Mr. Shelley all that exists exists indeed—color, sound, motion, thought, sentiment, the lofty and the humble, great and small, detail and generality—from the beauties of the blade of grass or the evanescent tint of a cloud to the heart of a man, which he would elevate and the mysterious spirit of the universe, which he would seat above worship itself."—*Leigh Hunt*.

"The very first letter [of Shelley], as one instance for all, strikes the keynote of the predominating sentiment of Shelley throughout his life—his sympathy with the oppressed."—*Browning*.

"Shelley had in him that element of wide sympathy and lofty hope for his kind which is essential both to the birth and the subsequent making of the greatest poets."—*George MacDonald*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Music, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory ;  
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the beloved's bed ;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on."—*To —*.

"Are there not hopes within thee which this scene  
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed—  
Whose stings bade thy heart look further still,  
When, to the moonlight walk by Henry led,  
Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death ?  
And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast,  
Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,  
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod  
Whose iron thongs are red with human gore ?  
Never ; but, bravely bearing on, thy will

Is destined an eternal war to wage  
 With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot  
 The germs of misery from the human heart.  
 Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe  
 The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,  
 (Whose impotence an easy pardon gains)  
 Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease."

—*Queen Mab.*

"Men of England, wherefore plough  
 For the lords who lay ye low?  
 Wherefore weave with toil and care  
 The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed and clothe and save,  
 From the cradle to the grave,  
 Those ungrateful drones who would  
 Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
 Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,  
 That these stingless drones may spoil  
 The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,  
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?  
 Or what is it ye buy so dear  
 With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow another reaps;  
 The wealth ye find another keeps;  
 The robes ye weave another wears;  
 The arms ye forge another bears."

—*To the Men of England.*

**6. Rare Imaginative Power.**—"So keen was his intellectual vision that he saw shapes where others saw none and shades and distinctions of shade where, to others, it was blank vacuity or darkness. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that faculty which peoples the universe with tenuous and gossamer

existences, which sees a faery world in drops of dew, which sports with the creatures of the elements, which is of finer insight and more spiritual texture than the brains of ordinary mortals. If Shelley errs in the excessive use of this faculty, we are also indebted to it for some of the most beautiful conceptions that ever adorned the pages of poetry."—*Purke Godwin*.

"If Coleridge is the sweetest of our poets, Shelley is at once the most ethereal and the most gorgeous; the one who has clothed his thoughts in draperies of the most evanescent and most magnificent words and imagery."—*Leigh Hunt*.

"Excess of imagination makes it impossible for him to realize and reconcile himself to his surroundings. . . . The fact is, Shelley was a poet—and a poet in whom the imagination was disproportionally developed. He was a creature not of reason, not of intellect, not of moral purpose, not of passion, but of feelings and imaginations."—*Edward Dowden*.

"If greatness in poetry consisted in a succession of dazzling images and a rapid flow of splendid verse, Shelley would be entitled to almost the first place in literature."—*W. J. Courthope*.

"He possessed an imagination marvellously endowed with the power to give shape and hue to the most shadowy abstractions which his soaring mind clutched on the vanishing points of human intelligence; a fancy quick to discern the most remote analogies, brilliant, excursive, aerial, affluent in graceful and felicitous images."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"His mode of thinking is not according to the terrestrial conditions of time, place, cause and effect, variety of race, climate, and costume. His persons are shapes, winged forms, modernized versions of Grecian mythology, or mortals highly allegorized; and their movements are vague, swift, and independent of ordinary physical laws."—*David Masson*.

"The strong imagination of Shelley made him an idolator in his own despite. Out of the most indefinite terms of a cold,

hard, dark, metaphysical system he made a gorgeous Pantheon, full of beautiful, majestic, and life-like forms. He turned atheism itself into a mythology, rich with visions as glorious as the gods that live in the marble of Phidias or the virgin saints that smile on us from the canvas of Murillo. The spirit of Beauty, the Principle of Good, the Principle of Evil, when he treated of them, ceased to be abstractions. They took shape and color. They were no longer mere words but intelligible forms; 'fair humanities;' objects of love, adoration, or fear."—*Macaulay*.

"His images pass before the mind like frost-work at moonlight, strangely beautiful, glittering and rare, but of transient duration and dream-like interest."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"From hard realities, from weariness of beholding oppression, Shelley rose like his own 'Skylark' into the trackless ether of imagination, which he filled with a glorious music and a quiver of joyous wings."—*Austin Dobson*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew;  
And the young winds fed it with silver dew;  
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,  
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on earth's dark breast  
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest."

—*The Sensitive Plant*.

"Evening came on;  
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues  
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray  
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;  
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,  
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks  
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day:  
Night followed, clad with stars."—*Alastor*.

" I sift the snow on the mountains below,  
 And their great pines groan aghast ;  
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,  
 While I sleep in the arms of the Blast.  
 Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers  
 Lightning my pilot sits ;  
 In a cavern under is fettered the Thunder,  
 It struggles and howls at fits.  
 O'er earth and ocean with gentle motion  
 This pilot is guiding me,  
 Lured by the love of the Genii that move  
 In the depths of the purple sea ;  
 Over the rills and the crags and the hills,  
 Over the lakes and the plains,  
 Wherever he dream under mountain or stream  
 The Spirit he loves remains ;  
 And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,  
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains."—*The Cloud.*

✓ 7. **Intensity.**—" Shelley's life was intense, and though only in his thirtieth year when his beloved element wrapped him in the embrace of death, the snows of premature age flecked his auburn locks ; and in sensation and experience he was wont to say he had far out-spiced the calendar."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

" Like an improvisatore, he gives rein to his fancy, and dashes wildly onward wherever the bewildering trains of thick-coming associations may lead. He was mastered by his genius rather than master of it. It was chiefly in the glow and intensity of his sentiments that the fast fusing power of his imagination was manifest. His heart, burning with the purest fires of love, seemed to melt all nature into a liquid mass of goodness."—*Parke Godwin.*

" The consuming intensity, indeed, with which his soul burned within him at the sight and thought of tyranny, amounted almost to madness. It ran along his veins like a tingling fire. His bursts of vehement feeling appear occasionally to rend and tear his frame in their passionate utter-

ance. . . . What he felt and thought, he felt and thought with such intensity as to make his life identical with his verse."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Shelley composed with all his faculties, mental, emotional, and physical, at the utmost strain, at a white heat of intense fervor, striving to attain one object, the truest and most passionate Investiture for the thoughts which had inflamed his ever-quick imagination. . . . In his intense enthusiasm he lost his hold on common sense, which might have saved him from the puerility of arrogant iconoclasm. All his sensations were abnormally acute, and his ever active imagination confused the borderlands of the actual and the visionary. He was entirely a child of impulse, lived and longed for high-strung emotion, simple, all absorbing, all penetrating emotion, going straight on in one direction to its object, hating and resenting whatever opposed its progress thitherward."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"An idea, an emotion grew upon his brain, his breast heaved, his frame shook, his nerves quivered with the 'harmonious madness' of imaginative concentration."—*Walter Bagehot*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"An old, blind, mad, despised, and dying king,  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring,—  
Rulers who neither see nor feel nor know,  
But, leech-like, to their fainting country cling,  
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
An army which liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—  
Golden and sanguine laws, which tempt and slay,—  
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed ;  
A Senate—Time's worst statute unrepealed—  
Are graves from which a glorious phantom may  
Burst to illumine our tempestuous day."—*England in 1819*.



" Oh let a father's curse be on thy soul,  
 And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb,  
 And both on thy gray head a leaden cowl  
 To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom !

I curse thee by a parent's outraged love ;  
 By hopes long cherished and too lately lost ;  
 By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove ;  
 By griefs which thy stern nature never crossed."

—*To the Lord Chancellor.*

" Horses, oxen, have a home  
 When from daily toil they come ;  
 Household dogs, when the wind roars,  
 Find a home within warm doors ;

Asses, swine, have litter spread,  
 And with fitting food are fed ;  
 All things have a home but one—  
 Thou, O Englishman, hast none !

This is Slavery ! Savage men,  
 Or wild beasts within a den,  
 Would endure not as ye do ;  
 But such ills they never knew."

—*The Masque of Anarchy.*

✓ **8. Taste for the Horrible.**—"Shelley not infrequently and purposely dips into curdling subjects, simply for the sake of the chill to the blood, the vibration of the nerves. There is not one of his longer poems in which he does not alternate the breathless upward flight of his own skylark with occasional plunges into a weird world of morbid horrors. . . . There was mingled with all his beauty a mind that was certainly unearthly, a vein of unearthly and ghastly delight in violating natural instinct, as illustrated, for instance, to take a very mild example, in the ghoulish prescription which he wrote out under a household recipe of Mary Godwin's. His early poems, especially, are full of wormy horrors, and the

loathsomeness of the incidents on which the plot of 'The Cenci' turns evidently had a dreadful fascination for him."

—*R. H. Hutton.*

"So far, indeed, from Shelley's having a peculiar tendency to dwell on and prolong the sensation of pleasure, he has a perverse tendency to draw out into lingering keenness the torture of agony. The night-shade is as common in his poems as the daisy."—*Walter Bagehot.*

"He has shown himself what the dramatist needs to be—as able to face the light of heaven as of hell, to handle the fires of evil as to brighten the beauties of things."—*A. C. Swinburne.*

"He turns to darkness and mystery and despair and horror wantonly, when all the sweeter secrets of nature are open to him, and without knowing, with the most curious obtuseness in the midst of his genius, unfolds all his horrors and misery. He revelled in the tempestuous loveliness of terror."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"In 'The Sensitive Plant' . . . one curious idiosyncrasy is more prominent than any other; . . . it is the tendency to be fascinated by whatever is ugly and revolting, so that he cannot withdraw his thoughts from it till he has described it in language powerful, it is true, and poetic, when considered as to its fitness for the end desired, but in force of these very excellences in the means, nearly as revolting as the objects themselves."—*George MacDonald.*

"His hungry craving was for intellectual beauty and the delight it yields; if not that, then for horror, anything to thrill the nerves, though it should curdle the blood and make the flesh creep."—*J. C. Shairp.*

"I agree with Mr. Gilfillan heartily in protesting against the thoughtless assertion of some writer in the *Edinburgh Review*—that Shelley at all selected the story of his 'Cenci' on account of its horrors or that he has found pleasure in dwelling on those horrors."—*De Quincey.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ And plants at whose name the verse feels loth  
 Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,  
 Prickly and pulpous and blistering and blue,  
 Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

. . . . .

Their moss rotted off them flake by flake,  
 Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,  
 Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,  
 Infecting the winds that wander by.”

—*The Sensitive Plant.*

“ How comes this hair undone ?  
 Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,  
 And yet I tied it fast.—Oh horrible !  
 The pavement sinks under my feet ! the walls  
 Spin round ! I see a woman weeping there,  
 And standing calm and motionless, whilst I  
 Slide giddily as the world reels !—My God !  
 The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood !  
 The sunshine on the floor is black ! the air  
 Is changed to vapors such as the dead breathe  
 In charnel pits ! Pah ! I am choked !

There creeps

A clinging, black, contaminating mist  
 About me—'tis substantial, heavy, thick ;  
 I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues  
 My fingers and limbs to one another,  
 And eats into my sinews, and dissolves  
 My flesh to a pollution, poisoning  
 The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life !  
 My God ! I never knew what the mad felt  
 Before ; for I am mad beyond all doubt !”—*The Cenci.*

“ Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven  
 Who brought me thither, four stiff corpses bare,  
 And from the frieze to the four winds of heaven  
 Hung them on high by the entangled hair ;

. . . . .

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,  
 The dwelling of the many-colored worm,  
 Hung there ; the white and hollow cheek I drew  
 To my dry lips—What radiance did inform  
 Those horny eyes ? whose was that withered form ? ”

—*Revolt of Islam.*

**9. Fearlessness—Sincerity—High Ideals.**—“ He was no tongue-hero, no fine virtue prattler. He did not speak from his lungs but from his soul. And sooner than betray one honest conviction of his intellect, sooner than award ‘mouth-honor’ to what he hated as cruelty and oppression, he was willing to have his genius derided and his name defamed. . . . He was always terribly in earnest. What he felt and thought, he felt and thought with such intensity as to make his life identical with his verse. He was a hero in the epic life of the nineteenth century. Ideas, abstractions, which pass like flakes of snow into other minds, fell upon his heart like sparks of fire. . . . He desired society to be pure, free, unselfish, devoted to the realization of goodness and beauty ; and he believed it capable of that exaltation. . . . No man ever lived with a deeper and more inextinguishable thirst to promote human liberty and happiness.”—*E. P. Whipple.*

“ One of the first things to be observed is the elevated conception which he had formed, and always strove to carry with him, of the true function and destiny of the poet. The vocation of the bard impressed him as the highest of all vocations. . . . No poet that has come after him, and few that were gone before him, had equal power of stirring within the soul of humanity such noble aspirations, such fervent love of freedom, such high resolves in the cause of virtue and intelligence, and such prophetic yearnings for the better future.”—*Parke Godwin.*

“ There is a wisdom which the world sometimes counts as folly—that which consists in devotion at all hazards to an ideal, to what stands with us for the highest truth, sacred jus-

tice, purest love. And assuredly the tendency of Shelley's poetry, however we may venerate ideals other than his, is to quicken the sense that there is such an exalted wisdom as this and to stimulate us to its pursuit. . . . Shelley at the age of nineteen was possessed by an inextinguishable hope for the world and an enthusiasm of humanity which never ceased to inspire his deeds and words. . . . He had a conviction that it is in the power of everyone, young or old, to do something to bring nearer the world's great age; that it is the duty of everyone to contribute something to the public good.

. . . Shelley, in 'Alastor,' would rebuke the seeker for beauty and the seeker for truth, however high-minded, who attempts to exist without human sympathy; and he would rebuke the ever-unsatisfied idealist in his own heart. . . .

It was, as Shelley believed, in a peculiar degree a poet's duty to sustain the hopes and aspirations of men in their movements of advance and at the same time to endeavor to hold their passions in check by presenting high ideals and showing that the better life of society is not to be rung out of the air by sudden and desperate snatching. . . . Shelley is absolutely free from any touch of untruthfulness in his opinions. No idea of self-restraint would ever make him hide his views. . . . He could always believe what he wished to believe and bring himself to see facts not as they were but as they ought to be."—*Edward Dowden.*

"Whatever Shelley was, he was with an admirable sincerity. It was not always truth that he thought and spoke; but in the purity of truth he spoke and thought always."—*Robert Browning.*

"No man was more single-minded, none a more ardent lover of abstract truth and ideal virtue."—*W. M. Rossetti.*

"Balance against all the ill that you can ever think of him that he was a man able to live wretched for the sake of speaking sincerely what he supposed to be truth, willing to die for the good of his fellows."—*Margaret Fuller Ossoli.*

"There is in Shelley at once a singularly ethereal nature and a singularly unthinking defiance of everything in human emotion which does not at once explain itself."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"The cause for regret is that so few should have paid homage to his pure and sincere intentions. Where can we find an individual in modern history of more exalted aims than Shelley? I honor Shelley as that rare character—a sincere man."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"He was the sincerest and most truthful of human creatures."—*De Quincey.*

"The cardinal characteristic of his nature was an implacable antagonism to shams and conventions, which passed too easily into impatient rejection of established forms as worse than useless. . . . To the world he presented the rare spectacle of a man passionate for truth and unreservedly obedient to the right as he discerned it. . . . There was ever present in his nature an effort, an aspiration after the better than the best this world can show, which prompted him to blend the choicest products of his thought and fancy with the fairest image borrowed from the earth on which he lived. He never willingly composed, except under the impulse to body forth a vision of the love and light and life which was the spirit of the power which he worshipped."—*John Addington Symonds.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"There is a nobler glory, which survives  
Until our being fades, and, solacing  
All human care, accompanies its change ;  
Deserts not Virtue in the dungeon's gloom,  
And, in the precincts of the palace, guides  
His footsteps through that labyrinth of crime ;  
Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness,  
Even when from Power's avenging hand he takes

Its sweetest, last, and noblest title—death ;  
 The consciousness of good, which neither gold  
 Nor sordid fame nor hope of heavenly bliss  
 Can purchase ; but a life of resolute good,  
 Unalterable will, quenchless desire  
 Of universal happiness.”—*Queen Mab*.

“ What are numbers, knit by force or custom ?  
 Man who man would be  
 Must rule the empire of himself in it !  
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne  
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy  
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.”—*Sonnet*.

“ And when Reason’s voice,  
 Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have waked  
 The nations ; and mankind perceive that vice  
 Is discord, war, and misery—that virtue  
 Is peace and happiness and harmony ;  
 When man’s maturer nature shall disdain  
 The playthings of its childhood ; kingly glare  
 Will lose its power to dazzle ; its authority  
 Will silently pass by ; the gorgeous throne  
 Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall  
 Fast falling to decay ; whilst falsehood’s trade  
 Shall be as hateful and unprofitable  
 As that of truth is now.”—*Queen Mab*.

**10. Love of Liberty — Independence — Lawlessness.**—“ He hated oppression and stormed against it ; but then all rule and authority he regarded as an oppression. He was altogether a child of impulse—of impulse one, total, all-absorbing. And the impulse that came to him he followed whithersoever it went, without questioning either himself or it.”—*J. C. Shairp*.

“ If love, justice, hope, freedom, fraternity be real, then so is the wiser part of the inspiration of Shelley’s radiant song. . . . But at the root of all was an absolute refusal

to submit to any sort of discipline or to acknowledge any form of authority. . . . Any one who attempted to restrain him he dubbed a tyrant, and he invariably refused to learn anything when he was taught. . . . Always preaching justice and tolerance, there are few who have formed more unjust opinions and indulged in more intolerant outbursts."—*Edward Dowden*.

"Neither the cruel jibes of his fellows nor menaces of punishment on the part of his superiors could bend a will whose single law was the self-imposed law of truth. He rejected an obedience which could only be performed at the expense of self-respect. . . . An over-fine notion of freedom brought him into conflict with masters and laws. . . . Every page of 'Queen Mab' is a fiery protest against the frauds and despotisms of priest and king. . . . To him the French Revolution was not a failure. . . . The evils of that frightful upturning of society seemed to him, as they now seem to every observant mind, transient, while the good was durable."—*Parke Godwin*.

"His whole life through was a denial of external law and a substitution in its place of internal sentiment. . . . Shelley's cry is, 'There is a law, and therefore I am miserable. Why should not the law be abolished? Away with it, for it interferes with my sentiments.' . . . Lawless love is Shelley's expressed ideal of the relation of the sexes, and his justice, his benevolence, his pity, are all equally lawless."—*Charles Kingsley*.

"Freedom he regarded as the dearest boon of existence. . . . Highly imaginative, susceptible, and brave, even in boyhood he revered the honest convictions of his own mind above success or authority."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"In Shelley we see a certain type of revolutionist, born out of due time, and directed to the bloodless field of literature."—*Edmund Gosse*.

"His passionate love of liberty, his loathing for intoler-



ance, his impatience of control . . . combined to make him the Quixotic champion of extreme opinions."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"'Prometheus Unbound,' however remote the foundation of its subject matter and unactual its executive treatment, does in reality express the most modern of conceptions—the utmost reach of speculation of a mind which burst up all crusts of custom and prescription like a volcano, and imaged forth a future wherein man should be indeed the autocrat and the renovated renovation of his planet. . . . It is the ideal poem of perpetual and triumphant progression—the Atlantis of Man Emancipated."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"He was in early years first a revolter; he took nothing upon authority; he acknowledged no validity in the customs and beliefs which past experience had bequeathed to men: he must examine every conclusion anew and accept or regret it by the light of his own limited thought and observation."  
—*G. E. Woodberry*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A glorious people vibrated again  
The lightning of the nations : Liberty,  
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,  
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,  
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,  
And in the rapid plumes of song  
Clothed itself, sublime and strong—  
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,  
Hovering inverse o'er its accustomed prey :  
Till from its station in the heaven of Fame  
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it; and the ray  
Of the remotest sphere of living flame  
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,  
As foam from the ship's swiftness, when there came  
A voice out of the deep; I will record the same."  
—*Ode to Liberty*.

“ As an eagle fed with morning  
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning  
When she seeks her aerie hanging  
In the mountain-cedar's hair,  
And her brood expect the clanging  
Of her wings through the wild air,  
Sick with famine; Freedom so  
To what Greece remaineth now  
Returns. Her hoary ruins glow  
Like orient mountains lost in day;  
Beneath the safety of her wings  
Her renovated nurslings play,  
And in the naked lightnings  
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.  
Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,  
A desert or a paradise;  
Let the beautiful and the brave  
Share her glory or a grave! ” —*Hellas*.

“ Honey from silk-worms who can gather,  
Or silk from the yellow bee?  
The grass may grow in winter-weather  
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant and men who pray  
And men who rail, like thee;  
An equal passion to repay  
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold  
To be that dear heart's mate;  
Thy love will move that bigot cold  
Sooner than me thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove  
Cannot divided be:  
I hate thy want of truth and love—  
How should I then hate thee? ”

—*Lines to a Critic*.

**II. Optimism—Faith in Humanity.**—"It was his aim as poet to send forth sounds that might shake the reign of 'Anarch Custom' and hasten the blessed era in whose coming he believed."—*David Masson*.

"He quickens within us a sense of the possibilities of greatness and goodness hidden in man and woman. . . . And who has heartened us more than Shelley, with all his errors, to love freedom, to hope all things, to endure all things, and even while the gloom gathers to have faith in the dawn of light?"—*Edward Dowden*.

"All the malignity of his foes and all the suffering which fell to his lot only served to make the flame of his philanthropy burn the brighter and with a purer radiance."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"Though he experienced the malevolence of humanity himself, he met inhumanity by humanity, and translated into his daily life the spirit that breathes through the Beatitudes. He counted his days not by the calendars of men but by the calendar of nature. Nothing existed that to him was not a minister of grace."—*G. B. Smith*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The world's great age begins anew,  
The golden years return,  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn :  
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam  
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.  
. . . . .  
Another Athens shall arise,  
And to remoter time  
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
The splendor of its prime ;  
And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
All earth can take and heaven can give."—*Hellas*.

“ Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,  
 Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth ;  
 And, by the incarnation of this verse,  
 Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !  
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth  
 The trumpet of a prophecy ! Oh Wind,  
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ? ”

—*Ode to the West Wind.*

“ These are the seals of that most firm assurance  
 Which bars the pit over Destruction’s strength ;  
 And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,  
 Mother of many acts and hours, should free  
 The serpent that would clasp her with his length,  
 These are the spells by which to reassume  
 An empire o’er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite ;  
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;  
 To defy power which seems omnipotent ;  
 To love and bear ; to hope till hope creates  
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
 Neither to change nor falter nor repent ;  
 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
 Good, great, and joyous ; beautiful and free ;  
 This alone Life, Joy, Empire, Victory ! ”

—*Prometheus Unbound.*

**12. Sensualism — Impulsiveness.**—“ I rather think that the late Mr. Bagehot was nearer the mark when he asserted that in Shelley the conscience never had been revealed—that he was almost entirely without conscience. . . . Of this double nature, this inward strife between flesh and spirit, Shelley knew nothing. . . . Shelley may be the prophet of a new morality, but it is one that can never be realized till moral law has been obliterated from the universe and conscience from the heart of man. . . . I am in-

clined to believe that, for all his noble impulses and aims, he was some way deficient in rational and moral sanity."—*J. C. Shairp.*

" 'Follow your instincts,' is his one moral rule, confounding the very lowest animal instincts with those lofty ideas of right which it was the will of Heaven he should retain."—*Charles Kingsley.*

"Shelley's imagination busied itself with fusing together mental and sensuous impressions into symbols of rare beauty. . . . A thin world of distilled loveliness and spontaneous instinct, but containing nothing that could be called the strength of divine love."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"Shelley is probably the most remarkable instance of the purely impulsive character, to comprehend which requires a little detail. . . . We fancy his mind placed in the light of thought, with pure subtle fancies playing to and fro. On a sudden an impulse arises; it is alone, and has nothing to contend with; it cramps the intellect, pushes aside the fancies, constrains the nature; it bolts forward into action. . . . The 'Epipsychidion' could not have been written by a man who attached a moral value to constancy of mind. . . . The evidence of Shelley's poems confirms this impression of him. The characters which he delineates have all this same kind of pure impulse. The reforming impulse is especially felt. . . . Shelley's political opinions were likewise the effervescence of his peculiar nature. The love of liberty is peculiarly natural to the simple impulsive mind."—*Walter Bagehot.*

"Shelley had all the merit of generous aspirations and feelings, but he was singularly deficient in self-control. He was guided entirely by his impulses; his impulses were often high and lofty, but they had never been controlled."—*Edward Dowden.*

"His emotional power dominated his intellectual power."—*Parke Godwin.*

" His movements are represented as rapid, hurried, and uncertain. He would appear and disappear suddenly and unexpectedly ; forget appointments ; burst into wild laughter, heedless of his situation, whenever anything struck him as peculiarly ridiculous."—*George MacDonald*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" She would have clasped me to her glowing frame ;  
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed  
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame  
Which now the cold winds stole ; she would have laid  
Upon my languid heart her dearest head ;  
I might have heard her voice tender and sweet ;  
Her eyes, mingling with mine, might soon have fed  
My soul with their own joy. One moment yet  
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet ! "

—*The Revolt of Islam*.

" See, the mountains kiss high heaven,  
And the waves clasp one another ;  
No sister flower would be forgiven  
If it disdained its brother ;

And the sunlight clasps the earth,  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea ;  
What are all these kissings worth,  
If thou kiss not me ?"—*Love's Philosophy*.

" Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die  
Perchance were death indeed ! Constantia, turn !  
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,  
Even though the sounds which were thy voice which burn,  
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep ;  
Within thy breath and on thy hair, like odor, it is yet,  
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.  
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet ;  
Alas that the torn heart can bleed but not forget ! "

—*To Constantia Singing*.

## BYRON, 1788-1824

**Biographical Outline.**—George Gordon, sixth Lord Byron, born in Hollis Street, London, January 22, 1788; father, "a handsome profligate," who first eloped with a marchioness, then, after her divorce, married her, and after her death married Gordon's mother for her money; Byron was a cripple from his birth, the tendons of one heel being so contracted as to cause a limp; Byron's mother's fortune is soon wasted, all except an income of £150 a year, on which she retires to Aberdeen with the child, and lives in seclusion in Queen Street; for a time the father occupied separate apartments near by, and sometimes petted the child; but he soon obtained money from his wife or his sister and escaped to France, where he died in 1791, possibly by his own hand; soon afterward Mrs. Byron's income is raised to £190, on which she and her son continue to live; as a child Byron is treated by his mother with alternate violence and tenderness, sometimes worshipped and at others called "a lame brat;" he is passionately attached to his nurse, Mary Gray, and learns from Dr. Ewing, of Aberdeen, much of the lore of the English Bible; Byron first attends a private school, then learns some Latin from the son of his shoemaker, and is at the Aberdeen Grammar School from 1794 to 1798; as a school-boy he is "warm-hearted, pugnacious, and idle;" during the vacations he visits the mountain districts about Ballanter, and dates thence his love of sublime scenery; in his eighth year he falls "violently" in love with a cousin, Mary Driff, and is nearly thrown into convulsions, in his sixteenth year, on hearing of her marriage.

In 1794, Byron succeeds to the peerage, and in October,

1798, a pension of £300 is given to his mother by the Government ; soon afterward she goes with Byron to Newstead, where there was a property belonging to the family worth about £1,500 a year ; Mrs. Byron now settles at Nottingham, and sends the boy to the private school of one Rogers ; he is tortured by the remedies applied to his foot by a quack named Lavendar, and writes a lampoon on that worthy ; in 1799 he is taken by his mother to London, is placed under the care of a skillful surgeon, and is sent to Dr. Glennie's school, near by ; Glennie finds him " playful, amiable, and intelligent, ill-grounded in scholarship, but familiar with scriptures and a devourer of poetry ;" while at Glennie's, Byron reads a pamphlet account of a shipwreck, which he afterward worked up in the plot of his " Don Juan," and here also he writes his first love-poem, addressed to his cousin, Margaret Parker, who died a year or two later ; Byron declares that his passion produced its " usual effect " in preventing sleep and appetite ; by the summer of 1801 Mrs. Byron's temper and her meddling with the discipline of the boy become insupportable to Glennie and to Byron's guardian, Lord Carlisle, and he is sent to Harrow, where he becomes the pupil of Dr. Drury, who wins the boy's affection and respect ; Byron detests the " daily drug " of classical lessons, and is always " idle, in mischief, or at play," but reads voraciously by fits, and excels in declamation ; he hates Harrow until his last year and a half, when he becomes a leader ; in spite of his lameness he is an athlete, and fights Lord Calthorpe for writing " damned atheist " under his name ; in March, 1805, he leads the school-boys in a revolt against the appointment of Dr. Butler, Drury's successor, whom Byron afterward satirized in " Hours of Idleness " under the name of " Pomposus ;" he forms warm attachments at Harrow, and once offers to take half the thrashing inflicted by a bully on Sir Robert Peel ; during his Harrow days Byron often visits Annesley Hall, the seat of his distant relatives, and there falls desperately in love with his



cousin, Mary Anne Chaworth ; he is greatly agitated on hearing of her marriage, in 1805, and this passion seems to have left the most permanent traces on his life.

In October, 1805, he enters Trinity College as a "nobleman ;" he is described by his tutor as "a youth of tumultuous passions," fond of riding, skating, and boxing, the patron of a prize-fighter, and a marvellous swimmer ; in August, 1807, he boasts of swimming three miles in the Thames at London ; he travels in a two-horse carriage with a groom, a valet, and two dogs ; he has frequent and violent quarrels with his mother, one of which ends in her throwing a poker and tongs at his head ; he is fond of gambling, and at one time travels with a girl in boy's clothes for a companion, whom he introduces as his younger brother ; he admits, in 1808, being in debt nearly £10,000 ; at one time he brings a bear to college, and insists that the animal sit for a fellowship ; his attendance at Cambridge is very irregular, but he takes M.A. July 4, 1808 ; in 1813 he presents £1,000 to a college friend in financial embarrassment ; among his closest friends at Cambridge are John C. Hobhouse, afterward Lord Broughton, whose friendship with Byron lasted during life, and C. A. Matthews, a most decided and outspoken atheist ; in his juvenile letters Byron boasts that he has been held up as the "votary of licentiousness and disciple of infidelity" and that he has read or looked through historical books and novels "by the thousand ;" his memory is remarkable ; in November, 1806, he prints privately a small volume of poems entitled "Fugitive Pieces," but soon destroys all but two copies on the protest of a Southwell clergyman against the license of one poem ; in January, 1807, he distributes a hundred copies of the volume, reprinted without the offensive poem, under the title of "Poems on Various Occasions ;" this volume attracts some favorable notice, and in the following summer he publishes "Hours of Idleness," a collection of his original poems and translations, including twenty of those before printed

privately ; a new edition of the " Hours " appears in March, 1808 ; meantime, in January, 1808, appears the famous criticism of the *Edinburgh Review*, probably written by Brougham ; Byron at once " drank three bottles of claret and began his reply."

On leaving Cambridge he settles on his ancestral seat, Newstead Abbey, then in ruinous condition, where he makes a few rooms habitable, and enters upon life-long litigation to recover other inherited property ; on March 13, 1809, he takes his seat in the House of Lords ; his " English Bards and Scotch Reviewers " appears during the same month, and reaches a second edition in April ; a third and a fourth edition appear in 1810 and 1811, but the fifth edition, prepared by Byron in 1811, is by him suppressed because many of his victims have then become friendly ; in 1817 Byron tells Murray that he will never consent to the republication of the satire ; during the spring of 1809 he entertains his college friends at Newstead, where they dress as monks, drink wine from a human skull, and otherwise offend the proprieties ; on July 2, 1809, Byron sails for Lisbon with Hobhouse and three servants ; thence he rides across Spain to Seville and Cadiz, whence he sails to Gibraltar ; thence to Malta, where he meets a Mrs. Spencer Smith, to whom he afterward addresses his poem " To Florence " and stanzas 30-33 in " Childe Harold," Book II. ; from Malta he sails to Prevesa and Tehelen, and narrowly escapes shipwreck ; in November he travels to Missolonghi, through Acarnania, with a guard of Albanians ; thence, at Christmas time, to Athens, where he lodges with Mrs. Macri, widow of the English Vice-consul, whose daughter Theresa is Byron's " Maid of Athens ; " leaving Athens in March, 1810, Byron visits, successively, Ephesus, Constantinople, and the Troad, and on May 3d he accomplishes the celebrated feat of swimming, like Leander, across the Hellespont from Sestos to Abydos ; Byron leaves Constantinople July 14th, and returns with his servant to

Athens, while Hobhouse returns to England ; Byron professes to have saved a girl from being drowned in a sack, during this voyage, an adventure later turned to account in "The Giaour;" he makes a tour in the Morea, is severely ill with a fever at Patras, and returns to spend the winter of 1810-11 in the Capuchin monastery at Athens ; in the spring of 1811 he sails for England, stops at Malta, and reaches London July 15th ; in a letter written during the voyage home Byron declares that he is returning "embarrassed, unsocial, without a hope, and almost without a desire ;" he had spent over £10,000 a year at Cambridge, and had obtained loans from the Jews ; in February, 1810, his creditors had threatened the sale of Newstead ; he prepares to enter the army, and has to borrow money with which to reach London on his return from the East ; while in London he hears of his mother's illness ; before he can reach her she dies, August 1, 1811, "in a fit of rage caused by reading the upholsterer's bills ;" the loss of his mother and of five intimate friends during four months affects Byron deeply, and he is found sobbing over his mother's remains ; the lady mentioned in his poems as "Thyrza," and whom he seems to have loved passionately but purely, has never been identified.

In October, 1811, he takes lodgings in St. James Street, London, where he shows to a friend the first two cantos of "Childe Harold," composed while he was abroad, and "Hints from Horace," a paraphrase of the "Ars Poetica;" arrangements are made to publish the latter, but, apparently from the lack of a good classical reviser, it does not appear till after Byron's death ; "Childe Harold" is refused by one publisher because of the attack on Lord Elgin as the despoiler of the Parthenon, but it is accepted by Murray, who continues thereafter to be Byron's publisher ; "Childe Harold" appears April 21, 1812, and is astonishingly successful ; the first edition is sold immediately, and, as Byron says, he "awoke one morning and found himself famous ;" for the copyright Mur-

ray pays him £600, which Byron gives to his friend Dallas, declaring that he will never take money for his poems; during the early part of 1812 Byron makes three speeches in the House of Lords; he becomes "the idol of the sentimental part of society," and meets Moore, Campbell, and Rogers at a dinner given by the latter, where Byron confines his diet to potatoes and vinegar—his method of preventing himself from getting too fat; he soon becomes intimate with Moore, although, during Byron's absence, Moore had sent him a challenge because of certain lines in the "English Bards;" at this time Byron is described by Coleridge and others as a man of surpassing physical beauty; during this and his later years he practised the most rigorous diet in order to reduce his weight, and often lived on a small allowance of rice alone; at intervals he varied this rigor, briefly, with the most excessive eating and drinking; he is said to have written "Don Juan" "on gin and water;" in the spring of 1813 he publishes "The Waltz," which he disowns on its failure; "The Giaour" appears in May, 1813, "The Bride of Abydos" in December, 1813, and "The Corsair" in January, 1814; by the autumn of 1813 "The Giaour" reaches a fifth edition, when it is increased from 400 to 1400 lines; the first sketch of the "Bride" was written in four nights, and the "Corsair" in ten days; the latter was hardly revised at all, and 14,000 copies were sold in a single day; in April, 1814, Byron composes his ode on the abdication of Napoleon, and in the following June finishes "Lara," which is published in August, 1814, in the same volume with Rogers's "Jacqueline;" Byron's "Hebrew Melodies," written on request, appeared with music in January, 1815; "The Siege of Corinth" and "Parisina" appear in January and February, 1816, and Murray pays over £1,200 for the copyright of the two poems; about this time Byron refuses to take 1,000 guineas for the poems, although it was proposed to hand over the money to Godwin, Coleridge, and Maturin; he afterward became less scrupulous about receiving money for his literary

work; meantime Byron was prominent in London society, was recognized as a second Beau Brummell, and engaged in gayeties as a member of half a dozen London clubs; he enters into intrigues with various fashionable women, especially Lady Caroline Lamb.

In September, 1814, he offers marriage to Miss Milbanke, a niece of Lady Lamb, a scholarly woman, somewhat prudish and pedantic, a friend of Miss Edgeworth and Miss Siddons, and heiress to a considerable fortune; he is accepted, and is married at Seaham near Durham, January 2, 1815; in the following March they settle at 13 Piccadilly Terrace, London, where they remain during their married life; in spite of numerous reports to the contrary, their early married life seems to have been happy; but Byron's financial troubles increased; he had obtained £25,000 from a forfeited sale of Newstead in 1812, but this had soon vanished, and in November, 1815, he is obliged to sell his library; yet he still refuses to take money for his copyrights; he becomes a zealous playgoer, and is often at parties "where all ends in hiccup and happiness;" in July, 1815, with the consent and approval of Lady Byron, who was well provided for by her own inheritance, Byron wills all his property to his sister, Mrs. Leigh, and her children; on December 10, 1815, his only child, a daughter, is born, and soon afterward Byron urges his wife to go with the child to the home of her father till some arrangement can be made with his creditors; as she now believes Byron insane, Lady Byron leaves London for her father's home January 15, 1816; she writes Byron affectionately, but, as the physicians can find no proof of insanity, she decides upon a separation; Byron at first refuses an amicable separation, but afterward consents rather than take the case into the courts; he is accused "of every monstrous vice," and is even threatened with mob violence, although Leigh Hunt and others defend his character; in March, 1816, he writes "A Sketch"—a scathing attack on Mrs. Clemont, Lady

Byron's maid, who is supposed to have been concerned in certain revelations of Byron's wickedness to his wife—and during the same month the lines to his wife beginning "Fare thee well," in which he expostulates with her for inflicting a "cureless wound;" he declares to Moore that no blame attaches to Lady Byron; in 1816 he made overtures for a reconciliation with his wife but was refused, and wrote "A Dream" and a novel called "Marriage of Belphegor," narrating his own story, which he destroyed on hearing of Lady Byron's illness, although a remnant is given in the notes of "Don Juan."

He sails for Ostend, April 24, 1816, and travels in luxurious style with Dr. Polidori, a young Swiss, as a companion, and two servants; he soon changes his resolution as to pay for literary work, and drives sharp bargains with Murray; he receives 2,000 guineas for the fourth canto of "Childe Harold," and by the end of 1821 has received from Murray £15,455 for his copyrights and manuscripts; in November, 1817, he finally sells Newstead for 90,000 guineas; the payment of the debts and mortgages leaves him an income of the interest on £60,000 during his life; he grows more prudent and "affects avarice as a good old gentlemanly vice;" he visits Brussels and Waterloo, and goes thence by the Rhine to Geneva, where he takes the Villa Diodati on the south side of the lake; here he meets the Shelleys and Miss Clairmont, who had come from England expressly to meet him, and the life of the party gives rise to much scandal; during the summer Byron and Shelley make a tour of the lake, are nearly lost in a storm, and while spending two rainy days at Ouchy Byron writes the "Prisoner of Chillon;" about the same time he completes the third canto of "Childe Harold," in which he shows the effect of being "dosed to nausea with Wordsworth" by Shelley; in the following September Byron makes a tour of the Bernese Oberland with Hobhouse, his life-long friend, and takes notes on the scenery; while at the Villa Diodati he writes also "To Augusta," the verses addressed "To my sweet Sister" (sup-

pressed at her request till after his death), the monody on the death of Sheridan, and the fragment called "Darkness;" in January, 1817, a daughter by Byron is born to Miss Clairmont, and is sent to him at Venice with a Swiss nurse; he refuses the offer of a lady to adopt the child, places her in a convent near Ravenna, where he pays double fees to insure her good treatment, and leaves her £5,000 as a marriage-portion; the child died in April, 1822, and was profoundly mourned by Byron, although he was indifferent and even hostile to her mother; in October Byron and Hobhouse cross the Simplon to Milan and proceed thence to Venice, where Byron resides for the next three years, taking a house at La Mira on the Brenta; in the spring of 1817 he visits Rome, and sends thence to Murray, in May, a new third act of "Manfred," as he had heard that the original was unsatisfactory; as his "mind wants something craggy to break upon," he begins to study Armenian at the Venetian Monastery; later he takes the Palazzo Mocenigo on the Grand Canal, where he plunges into "degrading excesses which injured his constitution and afterward produced bitter self-reproach;" here he writes the fourth canto of "Childe Harold," "Beppo" (published by Murray in May, 1819), and "Don Juan;" the first five cantos of "Don Juan" are published without the name of either author or publisher, and Byron is somewhat disconcerted at the outcry against it; in 1819 he "falls in love" with the Countess Guiccioli, an Italian beauty of sixteen, recently married to a man of sixty; he visits her at Ravenna, with the consent of her husband, studies medicine in order to aid her in recovering her health, and follows her to Bologna; in the absence of the Count, Byron travels with the Countess to Venice by way of the Euganean hills, and then establishes her at his house at La Mira; Venetian society is shocked, and "English tourists stared at Byron like a wild beast;" at Ravenna Byron had written "River That Rollest by the Ancient Walls," and from Bologna he had sent to Murray his "Letter

to My Grandmother's Review ; " Count Guiccioli asks Byron for a " loan " of £1,000, and Moore advises Byron to give the money and return the Countess, but Byron insists that he will " save both the lady and the money ; " in October, 1819, the Countess returns to her husband, and Byron talks of visiting England and dreams of settling in Venezuela in Bolivar's new republic ; after all the preparations are made for the trip to England, he suddenly changes his plans, accepts the invitation of the Countess to visit her, and is back in Ravenna at Christmas time, 1819 ; his daily routine at this time and during his later life was as follows : " He rose very late, took a cup of green tea, had a biscuit and soda-water at two, rode out and practised shooting, dined most abstemiously, visited in the evening, and returned to read or write till two or three in the morning ; " in disgust at the reception given to " Don Juan," he discontinues it after the fifth canto ; in February, 1820, he translates "*Morgante Maggiore*" and in March the Francesca da Rimini episode ; he begins his first drama, "*Marino Faliero*," April 4th, and finishes it July 16th ; it is produced in London during the following spring, and fails, much to Byron's annoyance ; early in 1821 he begins his "Sardanapalus," and finishes it May 13th, writing the last three acts in a fortnight ; he writes "The Two Foscari" within a month and "Cain" in less than two months ; during this same year, 1821, he also writes "The Deformed Transformed," and begins his dramatization, "Werner ; " early in 1821 he writes his vigorous letters on the Pope controversy ; his dramas, written at this period, are "often mere prose broken into apparent verse ; " "no literary hack could have written more rapidly, and some could have written as well."

In July, 1821, the Countess Guiccioli is divorced from her husband by a Papal decree and retires to a villa, where Byron visits her frequently, passing the intervals in "perfect solitude ; " Byron now becomes connected with the revolutionary movement in Italy, contributes funds, and is made



head of the *Americani*, a section of the Carbonari or revolutionary party; when the scheme is destroyed by the Austrian troops, Byron's associates are banished, and strong pressure is placed upon him to induce him to leave Italy; at this time he has an income of £4,000 a year, and devotes £1,000 to charity; he calls Shelley from Pisa to advise him, and finally leaves Venice for Pisa in October, 1821, "preceded by his family of monkeys, dogs, cats, and pea-hens;" on the way he meets Rogers at Bologna; he settles at the Casa Lanfranchi in Pisa, and the relatives of the Countess Guiccioli occupy a part of the same palace; at Pisa he is socially intimate with Trelawney and Shelley; he continues "Don Juan," by permission of the Countess, and has finished cantos six, seven, and eight by August, 1822; meantime "Cain" had been received with hostility, and Murray had grown cautious about publishing more of Byron's works; Byron and Shelley now propose to found a revolutionary paper with Leigh Hunt for editor, and they import that unfortunate genius from London with his wife and six children; the Hunt family take up their residence in Byron's palace; the paper, called *The Liberal*, survives through only four numbers, and contains Byron's "Vision of Judgment," his "Letter to My Grandmother's Review," his "Heaven and Earth," his "Blues," his "Morgante Maggiore," and a few epigrams; in the publication of the "Vision of Judgment" culminated a long and savage quarrel between Byron and Southey, during which Byron had challenged Southey, though the challenge had been suppressed by Byron's friend Kinnaird; during the summer of 1822 Byron is forced to leave Pisa by a stabbing affray between his servants and the soldiery, and he spends several months with the Countess Guiccioli near Leghorn; during the summer occurred the drowning of Shelley and the famous cremation of his body by Byron, Trelawney, and others.

From Pisa, late in the summer of 1822, Byron removes his household to Genoa, where he settles in the Casa Salucci at

Albaro ; during the summer he had swum with Trelawney out to his schooner, three miles and back ; at Genoa he meets Lady Blessington, who has since recorded her conversations with him ; he grows more restless, declares that he does not think literature his vocation, and says that if he lives ten years longer he will do something ; when the Greek committee is formed in London, in the spring of 1823, Byron, at Trelawney's suggestion, is made a member ; on July 15th he sails from Genoa for the Levant with Trelawney and several servants in a " collier-built tub," which he had bought and fitted out ; he takes 10,000 crowns of specie and 40,000 in bills ; on the way they touch at Leghorn, where Byron secures a copy of verses from Goethe ; they reach Cephalonia August 2d, and Byron remains there at a village called Metaxata till December 27th, while Trelawney and the rest go forward ; he sails for Missolonghi December 28th, and reaches there after narrow escapes from shipwreck and capture by the Turks ; he raises funds for the Greeks on his own credit, and in January is made commander-in-chief of the Greek troops ; while severely ill in January, he courageously awes a crowd of mutineers, who had broken into his room ; in the spring of 1824, while still at Missolonghi, Byron declines an appointment as " governor-general of Greece ;" he continues to starve himself to prevent obesity, but his health is seriously undermined by the malarial conditions at Missolonghi ; he frees certain Turkish prisoners at Missolonghi, and adopts a child found among them ; he dies of fever and bad medical treatment at Missolonghi, April 19, 1824 ; his body was buried at Hucknall Forkard, England.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

✓ **I. Intensity—Passion.**—“His passion is perfect—a fierce and blind desire, which exalts and impels his verse into the high plane of emotion and expression. He feeds upon nature with a holy hunger, follows her with a divine lust, as of gods chasing the daughters of men. Wind and fire, the cadences of thunder and the clamors of the sea, gave to him no less a sensual pleasure than a spiritual sustenance.”—*A. C. Swinburne.*

“The tremendous depth and intensity of passion, which Byron was capable of representing with such marvellous skill of expression, is powerfully displayed in his misanthropical creations, and tends to give them much of the sorcery they exercise on the feelings. . . . He is eminently a poet of passion. In almost all the changes of his mood the same energy of feeling glows in his verse. The thought or emotion uppermost in his mind at any time, whether it be bad or good, seems to sway, for the moment, all the faculties of his nature. He has a passionate love for evil, a passionate love for nature, for goodness, for beauty, and we may add, a passionate love for himself.”—*E. P. Whipple.*

“In his nervous and manly lines we find no amplification of common sentiments—no ostentatious polishing of pretty expressions. On the contrary, we have a perpetual stream of thick-coming fancies—an eternal spring of fresh-blown images, which seem called into existence by the sudden flash of those glowing thoughts and overwhelming emotions that struggle for expression through the whole flow of his poetry, and impart a diction that is often absurd and irregular, a force and charm which frequently realize all that is said of inspiration.”—*Francis Jeffrey.*

“There was the heart, ardent at the call of freedom or of generous feeling, and belying every moment the frozen shrine in which false philosophy had incarved it, glowing like the

intense and concentrated alcohol, which remains one single but burning drop in the centre of the ice which its more watery particles have formed."—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"If ever there was a violent and madly sensitive soul, . . . it was Byron's. This promptitude to extreme emotions was with him a family legacy and the result of education. . . . When he went to school his friendships were passions. . . . Small or great, the passion of the hour swept down upon his mind like a tempest, roused him, transported him into either imprudence or genius. . . . All styles appear dull and all souls sluggish beside his. . . . There were internal tempests within him, avalanches of ideas, which found issue only in writing."—*Taine*.

"His passionate nature could alone produce such a sarcasm as 'Don Juan.' . . . The vigorous reality which breaks forth in Byron's verses reproduces all the being of the poet in each one of those cadences which exhibit the beatings of his heart. . . . His poetry is always illuminated by a ray of lightning."—*Emilio Castelar*.

"Byron was too violent, and for that reason not true enough to answer the lasting needs of the soul."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"Byron's mind was the battle field of contending impulses. . . . The intensity of his feelings imparts to his style a splendor and passion that raises it ['Childe Harold'] far above the diction of his earlier poems. . . . Looking at his poetry from a purely lyrical standpoint, it is surely impossible for any man not to be carried away on the tide of its power and passion."—*W. H. Courthope*.

"It is hardly too much to say that Lord Byron could exhibit only one man and one woman—a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection; a woman all softness and gentleness, loving to caress and be caressed, but capable of being transformed by passion into a tigress."—*Macaulay*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I am too well avenged ! but 'twas my right ;  
 Whate'er my sins might be, *thou* wert not sent  
 To be the Nemesis who should requite—  
 Nor did Heaven choose so near an instrument.  
 Mercy is for the merciful !—if thou  
 Hast been of such, 'twill be accorded now.  
 Thy nights are banished from the realms of sleep !—  
 Yes ! they may flatter thee, but thou shalt feel  
 A hollow agony which will not heal,  
 For thou art pillowed on a curse too deep ;  
 Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap  
 The bitter harvest of a woe as real !" — *To Lady Byron.*

"The cold in clime are cold in blood,  
 Their love can scarce deserve the name ;  
 But mine was like the lava flood  
 That boils in Aetna's breast of flame.  
 . . . . .  
 If changing cheek and scorching vein,  
 Lips taught to writhe but not complain,  
 If bursting heart and madd'ning brain  
 And daring deed and vengeful steel  
 And all that I have felt and feel  
 Betoken love—that love was mine,  
 And shown by many a bitter sign." — *The Giaour.*

"Souls who dare use their immortality—  
 Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in  
 His everlasting face and tell Him that  
 His evil is not good ! If He has made,  
 As He saith—which I know not nor believe—  
 But, if He made us—He cannot unmake :  
 We are immortal ! Nay, He'd *have* us so,  
 That He may torture : let Him ! He is great—  
 But, in His greatness, is no happier than  
 We in our conflict ! Goodness would not make  
 Evil : and what else hath He made ? But let Him  
 Sit on His vast and solitary throne,

Creating worlds, to make eternity  
 Less burdensome to His immense existence  
 And unparticipated solitude ;  
 Let Him crowd orb on orb : He is alone,  
 Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant ;  
 Could He but crush Himself, 'twere the best boon  
 He ever granted ; but, let Him reign on,  
 And multiply Himself in misery !"—*Cain*.

✓ 2. **Misanthropy—Malignity.**—"He was completely master of the whole rhetoric of despair and desperation. . . .

Over all these works, amid the most brilliant shows of wit and imagination, are thrown the sable hues of misanthropy and despair. They are all held in the bondage of one frowning and bitter feeling. . . . They all display the gulf of darkness and despair into which great genius is hurried when it is delivered over to bad passions. . . . His misanthropy, real or affected, sometimes induced him to give prominence to qualities essentially unpoetical. The frequent pervasion of his powers and the unhealthy moral atmosphere which surrounds some of his splendid expressions have given rise to a sarcastic epigram, which declares that his ethical system is compounded of misanthropy and licentiousness, the first command of which is, 'Hate your neighbor, and love your neighbor's wife.'"—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Never had any writer so vast a command of the whole eloquence of scorn, misanthropy, and despair. That *Marah* was never dry. No art could sweeten, no draughts could exhaust its perennial waters of bitterness. . . . Year after year and month after month he continued to repeat that to be wretched was the destiny of all; that to be eminently wretched is the destiny of the eminent; that all the desires by which we are cursed lead alike to misery—if they are not gratified, to the misery of disappointment; if they are gratified, to the misery of satiety. His heroes are men who have arrived by different roads at the same goal of despair, who



are sick of life, who are at war with society, . . . and who to the last defy the whole power of earth and heaven. He always described himself as a man of the same kind with his favorite creations; as a man whose heart had been withered, whose capacity for happiness was gone and could not be restored, but whose invincible spirit dared the worst that could befall him here or hereafter. . . . There was created in the minds of many of these enthusiasts a pernicious and absurd association between intellectual power and moral depravity. From the poetry of Lord Byron they drew a system of ethics, compounded of misanthropy and voluptuousness, a system in which the great commandments were, to hate your neighbor and to love your neighbor's wife."—*Macaulay*.

"There is the canker of misanthropy at the core of all he touches. . . . We are acquainted with no writing so well calculated to extinguish in young minds all generous enthusiasm and gentle affection—all respect for themselves, and all love for their kind—and actually to persuade them that it is wise and manly and knowing to laugh not only at self-denial and restraint but at all aspiring ambition and all warm and constant affection. . . . It seems to be Lord Byron's way never to excite a kind or noble sentiment without making haste to obliterate it by a torrent of unfeeling mockery or relentless abuse and taking pains to show how well these passing fantasies may be reconciled to a system of resolute misanthropy. . . . We do not consider it unfair to say that Lord Byron appears to us to be the zealous apostle of a certain fierce and magnificent misanthropy, which has already saddened his poetry with too deep a shade, and not only led to a great misapplication of great talents, but contributed to render popular some very false estimates of the constituents of human happiness and merit."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"What does he find in science but deficiencies, and in religion but mummeries? Does he so much as preserve poetry?

Of the divine mantle, the last garment which a poet respects, he makes a rag to stamp upon, to wring, to make holes in, out of sheer wantonness. . . . A darkness which seems eternal fell upon his soul, so that at times he saw evil in everything. . . . Byron, being unhappy, distinguished himself among all other poets as Satan is distinguished among all angels."—*Emilio Castelar*.

"Moody and misanthropical, he rejected the whole manner of thought of his predecessors; and the scepticism of the eighteenth century suited him as little as its popular belief. . . . He proclaimed to the world his misery and despair."—*Thomas Arnold*.

"It [*'Don Juan'*] is a work full of soul, bitterly savage in its misanthropy."—*Goethe*.

"In *'Don Juan'* he pours forth a flood of cynical contempt on the high-strung romantic and sentimental fancies dear to that popular taste which he had himself done so much to encourage."—*W. H. Courthope*.

"Byron wandered through the world, sad, gloomy, and unquiet; wounded and bearing the arrow in his wound. . . . The emptiness of the life and death of solitary individuality has never been so powerfully and efficaciously summed up as in the pages of Byron."—*Mazzini*.

"He veneered the true and noble self which gave life to his poetry with a layer of imperfectly comprehended cynicism and weak misanthropy, which passed with him for worldly wisdom."—*J. A. Symonds*.

"[In speaking of *'Don Juan'*] These are the words of a sceptic, even of a cynic—it is in this he ends. Sceptic through misanthropy, cynic through bravado, a sad and combative humor always impels him. . . . You see clearly that he is always the same, in excess and unhappy, bent on destroying himself."—*Taine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Oh man ! thou feeble tenant of an hour,  
 Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,  
 Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,  
 Degraded mass of animated dust !  
 Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,  
 Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit !  
 By nature vile, ennobled but by name,  
 Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.  
 Ye ! who perchance behold this simple urn,  
 Pass on—it honors none you wish to mourn :  
 To mark a friend's remains these stones arise ;  
 I never knew but one, and here he lies.”

—*Epitaph on a Newfoundland Dog.*

“ I have not loved the world, nor the world me :  
 I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed  
 To its idolatries a patient knee—  
 Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud  
 In worship of an echo ; in the crowd  
 They could not deem me one of such ; I stood  
 Among them but not of them ; in a shroud  
 Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,  
 Had I not filled my mind, which thus itself subdued.”

—*Childe Harold.*

“ Dogs or men !—for I flatter you in saying  
 That ye are dogs—your betters far—ye may  
 Read, or not read, what I am now essaying  
 To show ye what ye are in every way ;  
 As little as the moon stops for the baying  
 Of wolves, with the bright muse withdraw one ray  
 From out her skies—there howl your idle wrath  
 The while she silvers o'er your gloomy path.”

—*Don Juan.*

✓ 3. Egotism — Self-Revelation. — “ No poet ever  
stamped upon his writings a deeper impress of personality or

viewed outward objects in a manner more peculiar to himself. Everything about him was intensely subjective, individual, Byronic. . . . Self is ever uppermost in his mind. The whole world is called upon to listen to the recital of the joys and the agonies of George Gordon, Lord Byron. . . . He tells his thousands of readers that they are formed of more vulgar clay than himself, that he despises them from his inmost heart, that their life is passed in a bustling oscillation between knavery and folly, and that all mankind is but a degraded mass of animated dust. . . . In whatever attitude he places himself, he evidently intends it to be the one which shall excite admiration or honor. . . . He gradually came to consider the world as made for him and unconsciously to subordinate the interests and happiness of others to his own. . . . We think that this egotism or selfishness in Byron was the parent of most of his vices, inasmuch as it emancipated his mind from the burden of those duties which grow out of a man's relations with society."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He was himself the beginning, the middle, and the end of his own poetry, the hero of every tale, the chief object in every landscape. . . . There can be no doubt that this remarkable man owed the vast influence which he exercised over his contemporaries at least as much to his gloomy egotism as to the real power of his poetry."—*Macaulay*.

"Never, in the first flight of his thoughts, did he liberate himself from himself. He dreams of himself and sees himself throughout. . . . He meditated too much upon himself to be enamored of anything else. . . . No such great poet has had so narrow an imagination; he would not metamorphose himself into another. They are his own sorrows, his own revolts, his own travels, which . . . he introduces into his verses."—*Taine*.

"*'Je suis en moi l'infini,'* exclaimed Byron, and this infinity of egotism left him in the end, like Napoleon, defeated

and defrauded, narrowed into the bounds of a small solitary and sterile island in the great ocean of human existence—or would have left him so had not Greece summoned him and Missolonghi set him free.”—*Edward Dowden*.

“He has treated hardly any subject but one—himself; now the man in Byron is a nature even less sincere than the poet. This beautiful and blighted being is at bottom a coxcomb. He posed all his life long.”—*Edmond Scherer*.

“In Byron the Ego is revealed in all its pride of power, freedom, and desire, in the uncontrolled plenitude of all its faculties. The world around him neither rules nor tempts him. The Byronian Ego aspires to rule it. . . . Byron stamps every object he portrays with his own individuality.”  
—*Mazzini*.

“That diversity of character which dramatists represent through fiction’s personages, Byron assumed himself; and he was either the villain, the enthusiast, the lover, or the jester, according as the wantonness of his omnipotent genius suggested. . . . He has not left a scrap of writing upon which he did not stamp an image of himself.”—*Thomas Moore*.

“Childe Harold may not be, nor do we believe he is, Lord Byron’s very self, but he is Lord Byron’s picture sketched by Lord Byron himself.”—*Walter Scott*.

“He hangs the cloud, the film of his existence over all outward things, sits in the centre of his thoughts, and enjoys dark night, bright day, the glitter and the gloom, ‘in cell monastic.’ . . . In reading Lord Byron’s works, he himself is never absent from one’s mind.”—*William Hazlitt*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“And now was Childe Harold sore sick at heart,  
And from his fellow-bacchanals would flee;  
’Tis said at times the sullen tear would start,  
But pride congealed the drop within his ee:

Apart he talked in joyous reverie,  
 And from his native land resolved to go  
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea ;  
 With pleasure drugg'd, he almost longed for woe,  
 And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below."

—*Childe Harold.*

" Childe Harold had a mother—not forgot,  
 Though parting from that mother he did shun ;  
 A sister whom he loved, but saw her not  
 Before his weary pilgrimage begun :  
 If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.  
 Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel.  
 Ye, who have known what 't is to dote upon  
 A few dear objects, will in sadness feel  
 Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal."

—*Childe Harold.*

" God help us all ! God help me too ! I am,  
 God knows, as helpless as the Devil can wish,  
 And not a whit more difficult to damn  
 Than is to bring to land a late-hooked fish  
 Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb ;  
 Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish  
 As one day will be that immortal fry  
 Of almost everybody born to die."

—*Vision of Judgment.*

**4. Power of Invective.**—"He laid bare the cant of English society and the corruption of the aristocracy, and lashed them with a whip of scorpions. He illustrated and denounced the social tyranny by which thousands were driven into crime and prevented from returning to virtue. The arrows of his scorn fell fast and thick among the defenders of political abuses. The renegade, the hypocrite, the bigot, were made to feel the full force of his merciless invective. Wielding an uncontrolled dominion over language, and profusely gifted with all the weapons of sarcasm, hatred, and contempt, he battled fiercely in the service of freedom, and knew

well how to overwhelm its adversaries with denunciations and stormy threats, with ridicule and irony, which should eat into their hearts as rust into iron."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"We trace an element of indignation in nearly all his subsequent poems, which break too frequently into invectives against unworthy or mistaken objects of his spleen. . . . If Byron desired fame, he achieved it in fair and full measure in his satire. . . . Satire, which at the outset of Byron's career crawled like a serpent, has here [in 'Don Juan'] acquired the wings and mailed panoply of a dragon."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"All the Satanic qualities with which he is supposed to have been endowed were called out of the depths of his heart by this satire ['English Bards and Scotch Reviewers']—cynicism, irony, sarcasm, anger, hatred, and the thirst for vengeance. The immortal cripple, like Vulcan with his red-hot hammer, ascended the English Olympus and spared none of the statues of the gods."—*Emilio Castelar*.

"How many well-regulated minds has he not lashed or laughed into rage! . . . The 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' could not fail to make a stir, consisting as it did of a rolling fire of abuse against nearly all the most conspicuous literary men of his time."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"May the strong curse of crushed affections light  
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight!  
And make thee in thy leprosy of mind  
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind!  
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,  
Black—as thy will for others would create:  
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,  
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.  
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed—  
The widowed couch of fire, that thou hast spread!

Then, when thou fain would'st weary heaven with prayer,  
 Look on thy earthly victims—and despair !  
 Down to the dust ! and as thou rott'st away,  
 Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay."

—*A Sketch.*

" Oh factious viper ! whose envenomed tooth  
 Would mangle still the dead, perverting truth ;  
 What though our ' nation's foes ' lament the fate,  
 With generous feeling, of the good and great :  
 Shall dastard tongues essay to blast the name  
 Of him whose meed exists in endless fame ? "

—*On the Death of Mr. Fox.*

" There Clarke, still striving piteously ' to please,'  
 Forgetting doggrel leads not to degrees,  
 A would-be satirist, a hired buffoon,  
 A monthly scribbler of some low lampoon,  
 Condemned to drudge, the meanest of the mean,  
 And furbish falsehoods for a magazine,  
 Devotes to scandal his congenial mind ;  
 Himself a living libel on mankind."

—*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.*

U 5. **Harsh Contrast — Abruptness.** — " Pictures of beauty are painted with hues that are words, and speak to us of heaven, only to be daubed with an impatient dash of the same pencil that wrought their exceeding loveliness ; majestic edifices are erected only to be overthrown ; statues full of life and feeling are created only to be dashed petulantly to pieces. Indeed, Byron experienced great delight in producing those brisk shocks of surprise which come from yoking together the mean and the exalted, the coarse and the tender. Some of these do little credit to his heart, and, in fact, cast ominous conjecture on the truthfulness of his feeling. . . . The gloom of his meditation is laced with light in all directions. Touches of pathos, tributes of affection . . . gleams of



beauty—these all appear in company with a cynicism which sneers at the object to which they appeal or a despair which doubts their existence.”—*E. P. Whipple.*

“But the author of it [‘Don Juan’] has the unlucky gift of personating all those lofty and sweet allusions, and that with such grace and truth to nature that it is impossible not to suppose, for the time, that he is among the most devoted of their votaries—till he casts off the character with a jerk, and the moment after he has exalted us to the very height of our conception, resumes his mocking at all things serious or sublime, and lets us down at once on some coarse joke, hard-hearted sarcasm, or fierce and relentless personality. . . . Thus, in this manner, the sublime and terrific description of the Shipwreck is strangely and disgustingly broken by traits of low humor and buffoonery. . . . Thus all good feelings are excited only to accustom us to their speedy and complete extermination.”—*Francis Jeffrey.*

“At the most touching moment of Haidee’s love, he vents a buffoonery. He concludes an ode with caricatures. He is Faust in the first verse and Mephistopheles in the second. He employs in the midst of tenderness or of murder penny-print witticisms, trivialities, gossip, with a pamphleteer’s vilification and a buffoon’s whimsicalities. He lays bare poetic method, asks himself where he has got to, counts the stanzas already done, jokes the Muse, Pegasus, and the whole epic stud as though he wouldn’t give a two-pence for them.”—*Taine.*

“He is by turns a cenobite and an epicure, chaste and voluptuous, sceptical and believing, a criminal and an apostle, an enemy of humanity and a philanthropist, an angel and a demon.”—*Emilio Castelar.*

“His parody on the speech from Medea on the summit of the Cyneans is a strong proof of the strange mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous in his mind. . . . Vivacity, gloom, tenderness, sarcasm, succeed each other too rapidly for

the current of ordinary feeling to follow them. We wonder without sympathizing ; the very power of the artist leads us to doubt the sincerity of the man."—*Thomas Moore*.

" Its [*Don Juan's*] power is owing to the force of the serious writing and the contrast between that and the flashy passages with which it is interlarded. From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step. . . . A classical intoxication is followed by the splashing of soda-water, by frothy effusions of ordinary bile."—*William Haslitt*.

" In him the sublime and the ridiculous, the noble and the mean, the sarcastic and the tender, the voluptuous and the beautifully spiritual, the pious and the impious were all embodied. . . . He was a many-sided monster showing now sublime and now grotesque."—*W. M. Howitt*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" And thus like to an angel o'er the dying  
Who die in righteousness, she leaned ; and there  
All tranquilly the shipwrecked boy was lying,  
As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air.  
But Zoé the meantime some eggs was frying ;  
Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair  
Must breakfast, and betimes—lest they should ask it,  
She drew out her provision from the basket."

—*Don Juan*.

" As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate  
Ne'er to be entered more by him or Sin,  
With such a glance of supernatural hate  
As made Saint Peter wish himself within ;  
He pattered with his keys at a great rate,  
And sweated through his apostolic skin :  
Of course, his perspiration was but ichor,  
Or some such other spiritual liquor."

—*Vision of Judgment*.

“ He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,  
 Or rather stomach, which, alas ! attends,  
 Beyond the best apothecary's art,  
 The loss of love, the treachery of friends,  
 Or death for those we dote on, when a part  
 Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends ;  
 No doubt he would have been much more pathetic  
 But the sea acted as a strong emetic.”—*Don Juan*.

6. **Grandeur—Magnificence.**—“ His work, beyond all  
our other poets, recalls or suggests the wide and high things  
in nature ; the large likeness of the elements, the immeas-  
urable liberty and the stormy strength of the waters and  
winds. . . . To him the large motions and the beauties  
of space were tangible and familiar as flowers.”—*A. C.*  
*Swinburne*.

“ The fierce and far delight of the thunderstorm is here [in  
‘ Childe Harold ’] described in verse almost as vivid as its  
lightnings. The live thunder leaping among the rattling crags  
—the voice of mountains, as if shouting to each other—the  
plashing of the big rain—the gleaming of the wide lake,  
lighted like phosphoric sea—present a picture of sublime terror,  
yet of enjoyment, often attempted but never so well, certainly  
never better, brought out in poetry. . . . In the very  
grand and tremendous drama of ‘ Cain,’ Lord Byron has  
certainly matched Milton on his own ground.”—*Sir Walter*  
*Scott*.

“ [‘ Of Childe Harold ’] Declamation unfolds itself, pompous  
and at times artificial, but potent and so often sublime that the  
rhetorical dotings which he yet preserved disappear under the  
afflux of splendor with which it is loaded. Wordsworth, Wal-  
ter Scott, by the side of this prodigality of accumulated splen-  
dors, seemed poor and gloomy.”—*Taine*.

“ Never did the eternal spirit of the chainless mind make  
 a brighter apparition amongst us. He seems at times a trans-  
 formation of that immortal Prometheus, of whom he has written

so nobly, . . . whose grand and mysterious form, transfigured by time, reappears from age to age . . . to wail forth the lament of genius, tortured by the presentiment of things it will not see realized in its time."—*Mazzini*.

"His enjoyment of nature in her grander aspects and the consolation he received from her amid the solitudes of the sea and lake and mountain, are expressed with sublimity in the passages upon the ocean and the June thunderstorm."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"The sublime disorder of Byron's genius is like the grand confusion of nature. . . . We must ascend to Jeremiah to meet in universal literature a poet who, like him, could send his voice from the tombs, repeat like him the elegy of rain. He raised himself at one flight to the most sublime regions of the spirit, in which all appeared to him expanded and glorified."—*Emilio Castelar*.

"His soul was exalted by the broad and mighty aspects of nature: for mosaic he was unfitted: a mountain, the sea, a thunder-storm, a glorious woman, such imposing objects aroused his noble rage."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Its [Manfred's] obscurity is a part of its grandeur—and the darkness that rests upon it and the smoky distance in which it is lost are all devices to increase its majesty, to stimulate our curiosity and impress us with a deeper awe."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Most glorious orb ! that wert a worship ere  
The mystery of thy making was revealed !  
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,  
Which gladdened, on their mountain tops, the hearts  
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they poured  
Themselves in orisons ! Thou material God !  
And representative of the Unknown—  
Who chose thee for His shadow !

Thou chief star ! Centre of many stars ! which mak'st our earth  
 Endurable, and temperest the hues  
 And hearts of all who walk within thy rays !  
 Sire of the seasons ! Monarch of the climes,  
 And those who dwell in them ! for near or far,  
 Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee  
 Even as our outward aspects ; thou dost rise  
 And shine and set in glory. Fare the well !"—*Manfred*.

" Oh, thou beautiful  
 And unimaginable ether ! and  
 Ye multiplying masses of increased  
 And still increasing lights ! What are ye ? What  
 Is this blue wilderness of interminable  
 Air, where ye roll along as I have seen  
 The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden ?  
 Is your course measured for ye ? Or do ye  
 Sweep on in your unbounded revelry  
 Through an ærial universe of endless  
 Expansion—at which my soul aches to think—  
 Intoxicated with Eternity ?"—*Cain*.

" Ye wilds, that look eternal ; and thou cave,  
 Which seem'st unfathomable ; and ye mountains,  
 So varied and so terrible in beauty ;  
 Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks  
 And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone  
 In perpendicular places, where the foot  
 Of man would tremble, could he reach them—yes,  
 Ye look eternal !"—*Heaven and Earth*.

**7. Depravity — Profligacy.**—" The admirers of his poetry appear sensible of some obligation to be the champions of his conduct, while those who have diligently gathered together the details of an accurate knowledge of the unseemliness of his conduct, cannot bear to think that from this bramble men have been able to gather figs."—*John Morley*.

"The recklessness with which he indulged in libertinism

was equalled only by the coolness with which he referred to it. In a letter to Hodgson in 1810, he makes the candid confession that he has found 'that nothing but virtue will do in this d——d world. I am tolerably sick of vice, which I have tried in all its disagreeable varieties, and mean, on my return, to cut all my dissolute acquaintances and leave off wine and carnal company and betake myself to politics and decorum.' On his return to England he changed this amiable determination, so far as decorum was concerned, though he paid some little attention to politics. He seemed determined to drain the wine of life to the dregs and to excel in all the pleasant methods of disposing of health, peace, and happiness which a great metropolis affords. . . . He appeared determined to be excelled by none either in literature or licentiousness. . . . He labors to make vice splendid. There are passages in his works which are not merely licentious in tendency but openly obscene. . . . Some portions of his works, for ribaldry and impurity, fairly bear off the palm from all other dabblers in dirt and blasphemy. A person unacquainted with the character of Byron would infer from these bold and bad portions of his poems and letters that his soul was the seat of obdurate malice. They seem to illustrate what Dr. Johnson calls 'the frigid villany of studious lewdness, the calm malignity of labored impurity.' They have none of that soft and graceful voluptuousness with which poets usually gild and humanize sensuality, and of which Byron himself was, when he pleased, so consummate a master. The faults of his life blaze out in his own verse and glitter on almost every page of his correspondence. . . . He gradually lost all moral fear. Everything sacred in life, religion, affection, sentiment, duty, virtue, he could as easily consider matter for mirth as for serious meditation. . . . His genius fed on poisons, and they became nutriment to it. . . . Byron casts the drape of the beautiful over things intrinsically mean and bad, and renders them poetical to the eye. . . . If he took

pleasure in idealizing the bad, he received no less in degrading the ideal."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He plunged into wild and desperate excesses, ennobled by no generous and tender sentiment. From his Venetian harem he sent forth volume after volume full of eloquence, of wit, of pathos, of ribaldry, and of bitter disdain."—*Macaulay*.

"Byron's cry is, 'I am miserable because law exists; and I have broken it, broken it so habitually that now I cannot help breaking it. I have tried to eradicate the sense of it by speculation, by action; but I cannot.' The tree of knowledge is not the tree of life. . . . That law exists let it never be forgotten, is the real meaning of Byron, down in that last terrible 'Don Juan,' in which he sits himself down in artificial calm, to trace the gradual rotting and degradation of a man without law, the slave of his own pleasures."—*Charles Kingsley*.

"There is the varnish of voluptuousness on the surface of all he touches. He, if ever man was, is a law unto himself—a chartered libertine. . . . Their [his poems] general tendency we believe to be in the highest degree pernicious. . . . We think there are indecencies and indelicacies, seductive descriptions and profligate representations, which are extremely reprehensible. . . . Under some strange misapprehension as to the truth and the duty of proclaiming it, he has exerted all the powers of his powerful mind to convince his readers, both directly and indirectly, that all ennobling pursuits and disinterested virtues are mere deceits or illusions—hollow and despicable mockeries for the most part, and, at best, but laborious follies. Religion, love, patriotism, valor, devotion, constancy—all are to be laughed at, disbelieved in, and despised!—and nothing is really good, so far as we can gather, but a succession of dangers to stir the blood and of banquets and intrigues to sooth it again! . . . The charge we bring against Lord Byron, in short, is, that

his writings have a tendency to destroy all belief in the reality of virtue—and to make all enthusiasm and constancy of affection ridiculous, and this by the constant exhibition of the most profligate heartlessness in the persons who had been transiently represented by the purest and most exalted emotion.”—*Francis Jeffrey*.

“Southey, the poet laureate, said of him that he savored of Moloch and Belial—most of all Satan. . . . Several times in Italy Lord Byron saw gentlemen leave a drawing-room with their wives when he was announced. . . . It is here [in ‘Don Juan’] the diabolical poet digs in his sharpest claw, and he takes care to dig it into your weakest side. . . . You see clearly that he is always the same, in excess and unhappy, bent on destroying himself. His ‘Don Juan’ is also a debauchery; in it he diverts himself outrageously at the expense of all respectable things, as a bull in a china-shop. He is often violent and often ferocious; black imagination brings into his stories horrors leisurely enjoyed. . . . Too vigorous and hence unbridled—that is the word which ever recurs when we speak of Byron. . . . When a man jests amidst his tears it is because he has a personal imagination.”—*Taine*.

“Whenever he wrote a bad poem he supported his fame by a signal act of profligacy; an elegy by a seduction, a heroic by an adultery, a tragedy, by a divorce.”—*Walter Landor*.

“Byron’s nature was in substance not that of the εὐφνής at all but rather of the barbarian.”—*Thomas Arnold*.

“He cannot be called a moral poet. His collected works are not of a kind to be recommended for family reading; and the poems in which his genius shines most clearly are precisely those which lie open to the charge of licentiousness.”—*John Addington Symonds*.

“‘Childe Harold’ is, I think, a very clever poem, but gives no true symptoms of the writer’s heart or morals.



. . . Vice ought to be a little more modest, and it must require impudence almost equal to the noble lord's other powers to claim sympathy gravely for the ennui arising from his being tired of his assailers and his paramours."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Fill the goblet again ! for I never before  
Felt the glow which now gladdens my heart to its core ;  
Let us drink ! Who would not ? since, through life's varied  
round,  
In the goblet alone no deception is found.  
I have tried, in its turn, all that life can supply ;  
I have basked in the beam of a dark rolling eye ;  
I have lov'd !—who has not ? but what heart can declare  
That pleasure existed while passion was there ?

. . . . .  
Long life to the grape ! for when summer is flown,  
The age of our nectar shall gladden our own ;  
We must die—who shall not ? May our sins be forgiven.  
And Hebe shall never be idle in Heaven."

—*Fill the Goblet Again.*

" Thus in the East they are extremely strict,  
And wedlock and a padlock mean the same ;  
Excepting only when the former's picked  
It ne'er can be replaced in proper frame ;  
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when pricked :  
But then their own polygamy's to blame ;  
Why don't they knead two virtuous souls for life  
Into that moral centaur, man and wife ? "

—*Don Juan.*

" Leads forth the ready dame, whose rising flush  
Might once have been mistaken for a blush.  
From where the garb just leaves the bosom free,  
That spot where hearts were once supposed to be ;

Round all the confines of the yielded waist  
 The strangest hand may wander undisplaced ;  
 The lady's in return may grasp as much  
 As princely paunches offer to her touch.  
 Pleased, round the chalky floor how well they trip,  
 One hand reposing on the royal hip ;  
 The other to the shoulder no less royal  
 Ascending with affection truly loyal !"—*The Walts.*

8. **Thoughtful Beauty.**—"He never lost a keen perception of the pure and beautiful. . . . The passages of thoughtful beauty which are scattered over his stormy and impulsive poems—following, as they so often do, fierce bursts of passion and the bad idolatry of hatred and despair—are as pleasing to the eye as starlight after lightning. In the third and fourth cantos of 'Childe Harold,' in 'Don Juan,' in the narratives and meditations which he has cast in a dramatic form, passages might be selected of most witching loveliness, of deep pathos, of sad and mournful beauty of sentiment, of aspiration after truth and goodness—of pity and charity and faith and humanity and love."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Never has the genius of man inspired pages more beautiful than those in which Lord Byron describes his travels in Greece."—*Emilio Castelar.*

"His poems abound with sentiments of great dignity and tenderness as well as passages of infinite sublimity and beauty."—*Francis Jeffrey.*

"'Childe Harold' is one woven mass of beauty and intellectual gold from end to end."—*W. M. Howitt.*

"The beauty of 'Cain' is such as we shall not see a second time in the world."—*Goethe.*

"Along with his astounding power and passion he had a strong and deep sense for what was beautiful in nature and for what was beautiful in human action and suffering."—*Matthew Arnold.*

"There was a strain in his poetry in which the sense pre-

dominated over the sound ; there was the eye keen to behold nature and the pen powerful to trace her varied graces of beauty or terror."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Ye stars ! which are the poetry of heaven,  
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate  
Of men and empires—'tis to be forgiven,  
That in our aspirations to be great  
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,  
And claim a kindred with you ; for ye are  
A beauty and a mystery, and create  
In us such love and reverence from afar  
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named  
Themselves a star."—*Childe Harold.*

" Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,  
Along Morea's hills the setting sun ;  
Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,  
But one unclouded blaze of living light !  
O'er the hushed deep the yellow beam he throws,  
Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it glows."

—*The Corsair.*

" The winds were pillowed on the waves ;  
The banners drooped along their staves,  
And, as they fell around them furling,  
Above them shone the crescent curling ;  
And that deep silence was unbroke,  
Save where the watch his signal spoke,  
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,  
And echo answered from the hill,  
And the wide hum of that wild host  
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,  
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air  
In midnight call to wonted prayer."

—*The Siege of Corinth.*

**9. Lofty Eloquence.**—" In his 'Childe Harold' he assumes a lofty and philosophic tone, and 'reasons high of

Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate.' . . . Lord Byron has strength and elevation enough to fill up the moulds of our classical and time-hallowed recollections and to rekindle the earliest aspirations of the mind after greatness and true glory with a pen of fire."—*William Hazlitt*.

"Filled with all these [Nature's] images of nobility and greatness, he gave them back to his page with a tone so philosophically profound, with a music so thrilling, with a dignity so graceful and yet so tender, that nothing in poetry can be conceived more fascinating and perfect."—*W. M. Howitt*.

"The matter with which he deals is gigantic, and he paints with violent colors and sweeping pencil."—*John Morley*.

"Feeling the unworthiness of his subject, he dazzles and blinds the eye with a blaze of words."—*E. P. Whipple*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Yet, Italy ! through every other land  
 Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side ;  
 Mother of Arts ! as once of arms ; thy hand  
 Was then our guardian, and is still our guide ;  
 Parent of our Religion ! whom the wide  
 Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven !  
 Europe, repentant of her parricide,  
 Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,  
 Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven."

—*Childe Harold*.

"Spirit of freedom ! when on Phyle's brow  
 Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,  
 Could'st thou forebode the dismal hour which now  
 Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain ?  
 Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,  
 But every carle can lord it o'er thy land ;  
 Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,  
 Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,  
 From birth till death enslaved ; in word, in deed unmann'd."

—*Childe Harold*.

“ Clime of the unforgotten brave !  
Whose land, from plain to mountain cave,  
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave !  
Shrine of the mighty ! can it be  
That this is all remains of thee ?  
Approach, thou craven crouching slave ;  
Say, is not this Thermopylæ ?  
Those waters blue that round you lave,  
Oh servile offspring of the free—  
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this ?  
The gulf, the rock of Salamis !  
These scenes, their story not unknown,  
Arise, and make again your own.”—*The Giaour*.

## Coleridge, 1772-1834

**Biographical Outline.**—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, born October 21, 1772, at Ottery St. Mary; father vicar of the town and master of the public grammar school, a man of unusual learning; Coleridge is the youngest of ten children; he is remarkably precocious and imaginative as a child, and says of himself later, "I never thought as a child and never used the language of a child;" he reads the "Arabian Nights" before he is five, and, on the death of his father, in 1781, obtains, through Sir Francis Buller, a presentation to Christ's Hospital, a school that he enters in July, 1782; here he forms an intimate friendship with Charles Lamb, which lasts during Lamb's lifetime; afterward, in his "Essays of Elia," Lamb writes of Coleridge as "the inspired charity boy," who expounded Plotinus, recited Homer in the Greek, and read Virgil for pleasure; before his fifteenth year Coleridge translates eight Greek hymns into English Anacreontics; on receiving, by accident, a subscription to a loan library, he "skulks out" of school and reads "right through the catalogue;" at first he proposes to become a physician, aids his brother in hospital operations, and memorizes a whole Latin medical dictionary; before his fifteenth year he exchanges medicine for metaphysics; Voltaire "seduces him into infidelity, out of which he was flogged by the head-master of Christ's Hospital"—a chastisement that Coleridge afterward called "the only just flogging I ever received;" he is recalled from metaphysics to poetry by falling in love with the sister of a school-mate and by reading the sonnets of Bowles, which he repeatedly transcribes as presents to his friends; while at Christ's Hospital he impairs his health by imprudent

exposure and improper and scanty food, but, in spite of spending many months in the sick-ward, he rises to the head of the school, which he leaves in September, 1790.

Having been appointed to an exhibition worth £40 a year at Jesus College, Cambridge, Coleridge begins residence there as a sizar in October, 1791, and becomes a pensioner in the following November; in 1792 he wins a medal offered for the best Greek ode; as he is prevented from competing for the highest honors of the university by his ignorance of mathematics, his reading becomes desultory, and he grows fond of society, in which he shines as a conversationalist; during 1793 he loses the favor of the college authorities through his liberal political views, and becomes depressed by debt; late in 1793 he runs away from Cambridge and reaches London, where he sells a poem to the *Morning Chronicle* for a guinea; soon afterward he publishes in the *Chronicle* a series of "Sonnets on Eminent Characters;" then he enlists in the dragoons under the name of Comberback, and is sent to Reading to be drilled with his regiment; here he fails as a horseman, but wins the favor of his comrades by writing their letters and nursing them in the hospital; an accident leads to his recognition and discharge from the army in April, 1794; he writes a penitent letter to his brothers, and through their aid he returns, April 12, 1794, to Cambridge, where he is admonished in the presence of the fellows; in June, 1794, while visiting a friend at Oxford, he meets Southey; soon afterward he makes a pedestrian tour through North Wales, where he meets his sweetheart, Mary Evans, at Wrexham; this tour is afterward described by Coleridge and his companion in a small volume; returning by way of Bristol, he again meets Southey there, and on short acquaintance he becomes engaged to Sara Fricker, daughter of a Bristol tradesman, to whose sister Southey was already engaged; while at Bristol Coleridge joins with Southey and others in developing a socialistic scheme called by them "Pantisocracy;" they were to marry, emi-

grate to the banks of the Susquehanna, and establish there a modern Utopia ; about this time Coleridge collaborates with Southey in writing "The Fall of Robespierre," which was published as the work of Coleridge in 1794.

Coleridge leaves Cambridge without a degree late in 1794, and first visits London, where he renews his association with Lamb ; Southey recalls him to his *fiancée* at Bristol, where Coleridge meets Joseph Cottle, a young bookseller, who lends him money to pay for his lodgings and those of the other "Pantisocratians" at 48 College Street ; Cottle also offers Coleridge thirty guineas for a volume of poems ; during the following six months Coleridge increases his income somewhat by giving at least eighteen public lectures, mainly on political subjects ; although the volume of poems is not completed, Cottle offers him one and one-half guineas for every hundred lines written after the completion of the volume ; with this assurance of support, the poet promptly marries Sara Fricker, on October 4, 1795, ten days before the marriage of her sister to Southey ; the Coleridges settle at once at a small one-story cottage at Clevedon, and Southey leaves his bride for a voyage to Portugal, whence he writes to Coleridge that the scheme of "Pantisocracy" must be abandoned.

Coleridge's first volume of poems, including three sonnets by Lamb, is published by Cottle at Bristol in April, 1796 ; he now proposes to establish a new journal, and makes a tour of Northern England in search of subscribers ; he secures over a thousand subscribers, establishes *The Watchman*, an eight-day paper, issues just five editions, and then abandons the venture on the ground that it does not pay expenses ; meantime Coleridge has become an occasional preacher at Unitarian chapels, and considers seriously the idea of becoming a regular minister of that sect ; while at Birmingham, during his tour in search for subscribers, he had met a young banker, Charles Lloyd, who was so fascinated by Coleridge's conversation that he gave up his business, and soon afterward came



to Bristol to live with the poet and to contribute largely to his support; in the winter of 1796-97 Coleridge and Lloyd remove to a small house at Nether Stowey, near Bridgewater, where Coleridge's friend, Thomas Poole, raises a subscription sufficient to provide the poet with a small annuity; a second edition of Coleridge's poems, with some by Lloyd and Lamb, appears in 1797; Lamb and his sister visit Coleridge at Nether Stowey in June, 1797, and soon afterward Wordsworth settles at Alfoxden, near Nether Stowey, in order to be near Coleridge; while at Nether Stowey Coleridge writes "Osorio," afterward called "Remorse," and refuses thirty guineas offered by Cottle for the drama because Coleridge hopes to have it produced on the stage, but Sheridan ignores it; during 1797 and 1798 Wordsworth and Coleridge collaborate in writing the "Lyrical Ballads," which are published in September, 1798; Coleridge's principal contribution to the volume was "The Ancient Mariner," to which Wordsworth contributed a few lines; during 1797 Coleridge also writes the first parts of "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan," although these poems were not published till eighteen years afterward; the volume "Lyrical Ballads" was a financial failure, and when Cottle sold out to the Longmans, a little later, the copyright was listed as having no value; Lloyd leaves Coleridge during 1798, and the poet renews, for a time, his former practice of preaching in Unitarian pulpits; about this time his friend Josiah Wedgwood offers Coleridge an annuity of £150 on condition that he will decline a proffered pastorate at Shrewsbury and devote himself henceforth to philosophy; after some hesitation Coleridge accepts the offer, and thereupon severs his connection with the Unitarian body.

In September, 1798, he starts for Germany with Wordsworth and Wordsworth's sister, Coleridge's expenses being borne by Wedgwood; the poets visit Klopstock at Hamburg, and when the Wordsworths go to Goslar, Coleridge settles at Ratzeburg, where he studies German diligently with a

Protestant pastor ; in January, 1799, he goes to the University of Göttingen, where he " indulges freely in his perennial pastime of disquisition ; " in May, 1799, he makes a walking tour through the Hartz Mountains and writes " Lines on Ascending the Brocken ; " he returns to England in June, 1799, visits Nether Stowey and the Lake country, and then shuts himself up in London for six weeks while he makes his masterly translation of Schiller's " Wallenstein," which is published in 1800 ; Coleridge had already contributed occasionally to the *Morning Chronicle*, and late in 1799, on the recommendation of Mackintosh, he is engaged at a guinea a week as a regular writer for the then newly established *Morning Post* ; his most successful contribution to the *Post* is " The Devil's Thoughts," of which a part was written by Southey ; Coleridge afterward declared that he had declined an offer of a half interest in the *Post* and in the *Courier*, together worth £2,000 a year, saying to the owner, " I would not give up the country and the lazy reading of old books for two thousand times £2,000 ; in short, beyond £350 a year I consider money a real evil ; " but this statement was perhaps one of the exaggerations due to the poet's indulgence in opium.

In July, 1800, Coleridge removes, with his family, to Greta Hall, Keswick, where Southey occupies another part of the same house from 1803 to 1809 ; at Keswick, in 1800, he writes the second part of " Christabel " and in 1802 his " Ode to Dejection," in which he bemoans the decline of his imaginative powers ; as early as 1796 he had begun to resort to laudanum for relief from rheumatic and neuralgic pains, and he had written the first part of " Kubla Khan " under the influence of the drug ; in 1800 he writes of taking opium for " the pleasurable sensations," and by 1803 he has become a confirmed opium-eater ; for several years prior to 1814 he takes regularly two quarts of laudanum a week, and during one week he records taking a quart in twenty-four hours ; because of the influence of the drug his statements

about himself at this period are quite untrustworthy ; his natural lack of business ability is intensified, he becomes gradually estranged from his wife, and he leaves his family to be provided for by Southey ; he visits Wales with Thomas Wedgwood in 1802 and Scotland with the Wordsworths in 1803.

In April, 1804, having received a loan of £100 from Wordsworth and another £100 from his brothers, he sails for Malta, and there acts, for several months, as secretary to the governor of the island, Sir Alexander Ball ; he leaves Malta in September, 1805, visits Sicily and Naples, spends some months in Rome, and then leaves suddenly for England on being informed by the Prussian minister that Napoleon has "marked" him because of certain articles previously published by Coleridge and reflecting on the French emperor ; Coleridge's vessel is said to have been pursued by a French frigate, and he is said to have thrown overboard his papers, including data gathered during his studies in Rome ; he reaches England in August, 1806, "ill, penniless, and worse than homeless ;" he visits Wordsworth and other friends, and first meets De Quincey at Bridgewater in 1807 ; De Quincey makes him a gift of £300 ; Coleridge is given a lodging at the *Courier* office in London, and, in the spring of 1808, he earns £100 by lecturing at the Royal Institution ; later in the same year he settles at Grasmere as a member of Wordsworth's family, and establishes *The Friend*, a journal that exists till March, 1810 ; then for a time Coleridge lives with Basil Montagu in London ; then he lodges with his old friend John Morgan, of Bristol, most of the time till 1816, though he seems to have been a kind of literary tramp during this period ; his lectures on Shakespeare in 1810-11 excited much interest, and were attended by such writers as Byron and Rogers ; from 1812 to 1818 he contributes occasionally to the *Courier* ; his neglect of literary endeavor because of opium-eating becomes finally so complete that his pension from the Wedgwoods is withdrawn ; in 1824 he becomes one

of ten "royal associates," who receive from George IV. a pension of £100 each till the death of that monarch; De Quincey and other friends contribute to Coleridge's support, and Byron induces the Drury Lane committee to produce "Remorse," which has a run of twenty nights, and brings a good financial return to Coleridge; from 1813 to 1816 he is so completely under the influence of opium as to lose the respect of most of his friends, although he completes his "Biographia Literaria" by 1815.

In April, 1815, Coleridge is received, on the appeal of his physician, as a guest in the home of Mr. Gilman, of Highgate, near London, and here he remains, with slight exceptions, till his death, meanwhile making a heroic and partially successful endeavor to discard the use of opium; at Byron's request for a tragedy Coleridge writes "Zapolya," which is rejected by the theatres, but is published by Murray in 1817 as a "Christmas Tale;" meantime, in 1816, Murray has published "Christabel" with "Kubla Khan" and "The Pains of Sleep;" three editions of this volume were sold in a year; in 1816 and 1817 are published two of Coleridge's "Lay Sermons," and in 1817 a collection of his poems called "Sibylline Leaves" and the "Biographia Literaria;" Coleridge gives his last series of public lectures in London in the winter of 1818-19 to "crowded and sympathetic audiences;" in 1820 appears his "Essay on Church and State," and in 1825 his "Aids to Reflection;" meantime he has become famous, and during his later years he is visited by many young writers, including Emerson, and is regarded as almost an oracle; most of the time after 1822 he is confined to his room and his bed, but in 1828 he travels up the Rhine with the Wordsworths, and in 1833 he visits Cambridge; he dies at Highgate, London, July 25, 1834.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

1. **Miltonic Eloquence—Sublimity.**—"A sublime man who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood, escaping from the black materialisms and revolutionary deluges with 'God, freedom, and immortality' still his; a king of men."—*Carlyle*.

"The majestic rush and roar of that irregular anapæstic measure, used once or twice by this supreme master of them all, no student can follow without an exultation of enjoyment. The 'Hymn to the Earth' has a sonorous and oceanic strength of harmony, a grace and glory of life, that fill the sense with a vigorous delight."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"His genius at that time [1798] had angelic wings and fed on manna. . . . His thoughts did not seem to come with labor and effort but as if borne on the gusts of genius and as if the wings of imagination lifted him from off his feet. . . . His voice rolled on the ear like the pealing organ, and its song alone was the music of thought. His mind was clothed with wings, and, raised on them, he lifted philosophy to heaven."—*William Hazlitt*.

"He has gone about in the true spirit of an old Greek bard, with a noble carelessness of self, giving fit utterance to the divine spirit within him. . . . There is nothing more wonderful than the facile majesty of his images or rather of his world of imagery, which, whether in his poetry or his prose, starts up before us self-raised and all-perfect, like the palace of Aladdin. He ascends the sublimest truths by a winding track of sparkling glory."—*T. N. Talfourd*.

"Nature moved Coleridge to eloquence, rhapsody, and worship as an artist to imaginative mysticism."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"In divine things Coleridge's poetry takes on a Miltonic majesty of diction and a Miltonic stateliness of rhyme. It is as if some sweet and solemn strain of organ music had succeeded to the blast of the war-bugles and the roll of drums."—*H. D. Traill*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star  
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause  
On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!  
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base

Rave ceaselessly ; but thou, most awful Form !  
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,  
How silently ! Around thee and above  
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,  
An ebon mass : methinks thou piercest it  
As with a wedge ! But when I look again,  
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,  
Thy habitation from eternity !  
O dread and silent Mount ! I gazed upon thee,  
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,  
Didst vanish from my thought : entranced in prayer  
I worshipped the Invisible alone."

—*Hymn in the Vale of Chamouni.*

"Ye Clouds ! that far above me float and pause,  
Whose pathless march no mortal can control !  
Ye Ocean-waves ! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,  
Yield homage only to eternal laws !  
Ye woods ! that listen to the night-bird's singing,  
O ye loud waves ! and O ye Forests high !  
And O ye clouds that far above me soar'd !  
Thou rising sun ! thou blue rejoicing sky !  
Yea, everything that is, and will be free !  
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,  
With what deep worship I have still adored  
The spirit of divinest liberty."—*The Destiny of Nations.*

"O Spirit blest !  
Whether the Eternal's throne around,  
Amidst the blaze of Seraphim,  
Thou pourest forth the grateful hymn,  
Or soaring through the blest domain  
Enrapturest angels with thy strain,  
Grant me, like thee, the lyre to sound,  
Like thee with fire divine to glow ;  
But ah ! when rage the waves of woe,  
Grant me with firmer breast to meet their hate  
And soar beyond the storm with upright eyes elate !"

—*On the Death of Chatterton.*



✓ **2. Realistic Supernaturalism.**—"Coleridge has been peculiarly successful in reducing to the fetters of time and place certain things in their nature evanescent. There are certain moods, lasting but a little while, which cannot be explained by any patent mental philosophy that I am aware of. . . . In reading 'Kubla Khan' we seem rapt into that paradise revealed to Swedenborg, where music and color and perfume were one, where you could hear the hues and see the harmonies of heaven."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"His theology of nature went through two phases. The first, in his world-going period, is very fantastic. There are multitudes of spirits, he conceived, belonging to the service of God; some contemplating spirits, who gazed forever on the front of Deity; some in whose hands lay the guidance and fate of nations, but others who were the forming spirits of creation, by whose operation all nature grew and made itself and died and was born again. . . . Nature, therefore, in all its myriad forms, is ever alive in God. . . . He [Coleridge] changes afterward to the idea that it is that of God in us that makes nature to us. The existence of the outward world is only phenomenal, not actual. We have given us the forms of things in thought; and, thinking these, we see, hear, and feel them, and build up the world of nature for ourselves."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Wordsworth gives us a series of realistic themes; Coleridge gives us supernatural incident possessed with the reality of human interest. Pater speaks of this characteristic as 'romantic weirdness; the imaginative apprehension of the silent and unseen processes of nature.' "—*Hall Caine*.

"For his poetry, his philosophical criticism, and the tradition of his conversation, Coleridge will probably be most esteemed by posterity. As a poet, we think that his genius is displayed with the most wonderful effect in 'Christabel,' and 'The Ancient Mariner.' In these the mystical element of human nature has its finest poetical embodiment. They act upon the mind with a weird-like influence, searching out the

most obscure recesses of the soul and making mysterious emotions in the very centre of our being and then sending them to glide and tingle along every nerve and vein with the effect of enchantment. It is as if we were possessed with a subtle insanity or had stolen a glance into the occult secrets of the universe. All our customary impressions of things are shaken by the intrusion of an indefinite sense of fear and amazement into the soul. . . . He could likewise stir that supernatural fear in the heart which he has so powerfully expressed in one stanza of 'The Ancient Mariner'—a fear from which no person, poet or prosaist, has ever been entirely free, and which makes the blood of the pleasantest atheist at times turn cold and his philosophy slide away under his feet."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He who has seen a mouldering tower by the side of a crystal lake, hid by the mist but glittering in the wave below, may conceive the dim, glimmering, uncertain intelligence of his eye; he who has marked the evening clouds uprolled (a world of vapors) has seen the picture of his mind, unearthly, unsubstantial, with gorgeous tints and ever varying forms."—*William Hazlitt*.

"In 'Christabel' the human and the supernatural elements interpenetrate each other more completely and more subtly than in 'The Ancient Mariner.' The presence of higher than mortal powers for evil and for good is everywhere felt, yet nowhere is it thrust forward. . . . Although . . . we are aware of the ghostly presence of the maiden's mother, we never see the phantom. . . . But Coleridge has elsewhere created a visible ghost, a ghost which appears under the strangest circumstances, a ghost itself so strange that Coleridge may be said to have invented a new spiritual fear. . . . Here again in the 'Wanderings of Cain' loveliness and terror are allied."—*Edward Dowden*.

"The world . . . in which the strange history of 'The Ancient Mariner' was transacted . . . is a world in which both animated things and brooks and clouds and

plants are moved by spiritual agency ; in which, as he would put it, the veil of the senses is nothing but a symbolism, everywhere telling of unseen and supernatural forces. What we call the solid and the substantial becomes a dream ; and the dream is the true underlying reality."—*Leslie Stephen*.

" It is the delicacy, the dreamy grace, in his presentation of the marvellous, which makes Coleridge's work so remarkable. . . . Coleridge's power is in the very fineness with which, as by some really ghostly finger, he brings home to our inmost sense his inventions, daring as they are. . . . 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' has the plausibility, the perfect adaptation to reason, and the general aspect of life, which belong to the marvellous, when actually presented as part of a credible experience in our dreams."—*Walter Pater*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" The western wave was all aflame,  
The day was well-nigh done !  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright sun ;  
When that strange shape drove suddenly  
Betwixt us and the sun.

And straight the sun was flecked with bars,  
(Heaven's mother show us grace ! )  
As if through a dungeon gate he peered  
With broad and burning face.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)  
How fast she nears and nears !  
Are those her sails that glance in the sun  
Like restless gossameres ?

Are those her ribs through which the sun  
Did peer, as through a grate ?  
And is that woman all her crew ?  
Is that a Death ? and are there two ?  
Is Death that woman's mate ? "

—*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

"The maid, devoid of guile and sin,  
 I know not how, in fearful wise  
 So deeply had she drunken in  
 That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
 That all the features were resigned  
 To this sole image of her mind ;  
 And passively did imitate  
 That look of dull and treacherous hate,  
 And thus she stood in dizzy trance,  
 Still picturing that look askance  
 With forced unconscious sympathy  
 Full before her father's view."—*Christabel*.

"From his obscure haunt  
 Shrieked Fear, of Cruelty the ghastly dam,  
 Feverous yet freezing, eager-paced yet slow,  
 As she that creeps forth from her swampy reeds,  
 Ague, the biform hag ! when early Spring  
 Beams on the marsh-bred vapours."

—*The Destiny of Nations*.

✓ 3. **Musical Versification.**—"For absolute melody and splendor it were hardly rash to call it ['Kubla Khan'] the first poem in the language. An exquisite instinct married to a subtle science of verse has made it the supreme model of music in our language. . . . Shelley, indeed, comes nearest ; but for purity and volume of music Shelley is to Coleridge as a lark to a nightingale ; his song is heaven—high and clear as heaven, but the other's is more rich and weighty, more passionately various and warmer in the effusion of sound. . . . His 'subtle sway and masterdom' of music could make sweet and strong even the feeble and tuneless form of metre called hexameter in English. . . . All the elements that compose the perfect form of English metre, as limbs and veins and features a beautiful body of man, were more familiar, more subject, as it were, to this great poet than to any other. How, for instance, no less than rhyme, assonance and alliteration are forces, requisite components of high and

ample harmony, witness once for all the divine passage which begins—'Five miles meandering with a mazy motion.' . . . Gycine's song flashes out like a visible sunbeam: it is one of the brightest bits of music ever done in words."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"Coleridge has taken the old ballad measure and given it, by an indefinable charm wholly his own, all the sweetness, all the melody and compass of a symphony. . . . The words seem common words enough, but in the order of them, in the choice, variety, and position of the vowel sounds, they become magical. The most decrepit vocable in the language throws away its crutches to dance and sing at his piping."—*Lowell*.

✓ "In his 'France' . . . freedom in artistic handling is at one with obedience to artistic law. Mr. Theodore Watts . . . has called attention to what he describes as its fluidity of metrical movement. 'The more billowy the metrical waves,' he says, 'the better suited they are to render the emotions expressed by the ode;' and he points out how in the opening stanza of 'France' the first metrical wave, after it has gently fallen at the end of the first quatrain, leaps up again on the double rhymes and goes bounding on, billow after billow, to the end of the stanza. The mastery of a prolonged period in lyrical poetry is rare even with great writers."—*Edward Dowden*.

"For exquisite music of metrical movement and for imaginative phantasy . . . there is nothing in our language to be compared with 'Christabel' and 'Kubla Khan' and with the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner.'"—*Stopford Brooke*.

"It ['The Ancient Mariner'] has that rich, varied movement in the verse which gives a distinct idea of the lofty or changeful tones of Mr. Coleridge's voice."—*William Hazlitt*.

"The Coleridge of the imaginative, haunting melody and

sovereign judgment unparalleled in his time."—*E. C. Steadman*.

"The harmony and variety of Coleridge's versification, his exquisite delineations of the heart, his command of imagery, his 'wide-wandering magnificence of imagination,' have so often been the theme of admiring comment that they need not be dwelt on here."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"The last of these ['Tears in Solitude'] opens and closes with some of his best blank verses, full of lambent light and his own exquisite music; . . . the language so simple yet so aerially musical, the rhythm so original yet so fitted to the story [of 'Christabel']."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"Coleridge is, in fact, the great musician of the romantic school of English poetry. His practice is the exact antithesis of Wordsworth's theory that there is no essential difference between the language of poetry and that of prose. In him metrical movement was all in all. He was the first to depart from the lofty iambic movement which had satisfied the feeling of the eighteenth century and, by associating picturesque images and antique phrases in melodious and pleasing metre, to set the imagination free in a world quite removed from actual experience."—*W. J. Courthope*.

"'Kubla Khan' is an ecstasy of sound."—*William Rossetti*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The night is chill ; the forest bare ;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?  
There is not wind enough in the air  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek—  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can,  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky."

—*Christabel*.

“ The little cloud—it floats away,  
 Away it goes ; away so soon ?  
 Alas ! it has no power to stay :  
 Its hues are dim, its hues are gray—  
 Away it passes from the moon !  
 How mournfully it seems to fly,  
 Ever fading more and more,  
 To joyless regions of the sky—  
 And now 'tis whiter than before ! ”—*Lewti.*

“ A little child, a limber elf,  
 Singing, dancing to itself  
 A fairy thing with red round cheeks  
 That always finds and never seeks  
 Makes such a vision to the sight  
 As fills a father's eyes with light.”—*Christabel.*

✓ 4. **Picturesqueness.**—“ It is in a highly sensitive apprehension of the aspects of external nature that Coleridge identifies himself most closely with one of the main tendencies of the Lake School. . . . A characteristic watchfulness for the minute fact and expression of natural scenery pervades all he writes—a closeness to the exact physiognomy of nature. . . . This induces in him no indifference to actual color and form and process but such minute realism as this—

‘ The thin grey cloud is spread on high,  
 It covers but not hides the sky.  
 The moon is behind and at the full ;  
 And yet she looks both small and dull.’ ”

—*Waller Pater.*

“ And how picturesque it [‘ The Ancient Mariner ’] is in the proper sense of the word ! I know nothing like it. There is not a description in it. It is all picture. Descriptive poets generally confuse us through multiplicity of detail ; we cannot see their forest for the trees : but Coleridge never errs in this way. With instinctive tact he touches the right chord of association and is satisfied, as we also are.”—*Lowell.*

"If we would find a poetical rendering of the landscape of Quantocks, with its unambitious loveliness of coomb and cliff, . . . and again those fine bursts of prospect, . . . we must turn to the Nether Stowey poems of Coleridge. . . . Assuredly, the writer, . . . who was a traveller at times through cloudland, and who could create from his imagination such visions as those of 'Kubla Khan,' had also his foot on English grass and heather, and writing, to use Wordsworth's phrase, with his eye upon the object, was able to add a page of rare fidelity to the descriptive poetry of our country. . . . How exquisite is the description of the journeying moon, what magic in the simplest words :

' The moving moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide ;  
Softly she was going up  
With a star or two beside.'"

—*Edward Dowden.*

"In his descriptions you saw the progress of human happiness and liberty in bright and never-ending succession, like the steps of Jacob's ladder, with airy shapes ascending and descending and with the voice of God at the top of the ladder." — *William Hazlitt.*

"Talfourd writes of seeing 'the palm-trees wave and the pyramids tower in the long perspective of his style' — . . . the gorgeous suggestiveness of his poetry." — *E. P. Whipple.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Oh then 'twere loveliest sympathy to mark  
The berries of the half-uprooted ash  
Dripping and bright ; and list the torrents' dash,  
Beneath the cypress or the yew more dark,  
Seated at ease on some smooth, mossy rock ;  
. . . . .  
Till high o'erhead his beckoning friend appears.  
And from the forehead of the topmost crag  
Shouts eagerly ; for haply there uprears



That shadowing pine its old romantic limbs  
 Which latest shall detain the enamoured sight  
 Seen from below, whene'er the valley dims,  
 Tinged yellow with the rich departing light ;  
 And haply, basoned in some unsunned cleft,  
 A beauteous spring, the rock's collected tears,  
 Sleeps sheltered there, scarce wrinkled by the gale."

—*To a Young Friend.*

" A green and silent spot, amid the hills,  
 A small and silent dell ! O'er stiller place  
 No singing sky-lark ever poised himself :  
 The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope  
 Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,  
 All golden with the never-bloomless furze,  
 Which now blooms most profusely : but the dell,  
 Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate  
 As vernal cornfield or the unripe flax,  
 When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,  
 The level sunshine glimmers with green light."

—*Fears in Solitude.*

" As when a shepherd on a vernal morn  
 Through some thick fog creeps tim'rous with slow foot ;  
 Darkling he fixes on th' immediate road  
 His downward eye : all else of fairest kind  
 Hid or deformed. But lo ! the bursting Sun !  
 Touched by the enchantment of that sudden beam,  
 Strait the black vapour melteth, and in globes  
 Of dewy glitter gems each bank and tree ;  
 On every leaf, on every blade it hangs !  
 Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,  
 And wide around the landscape streams with glory !"

—*Religious Musings.*

**5. Tenderness.**—"The tenderness of sentiment which touches with significant color the pure white imagination is here [in 'The Ancient Mariner'] soft and piteous enough, but womanly rather than effeminate."—*A. C. Swinburne.*

"Critics . . . hardly realize enough the fine humanity in Coleridge's poetry. . . . 'I conceive the leading point about Coleridge's work,' wrote Dante Rossetti, 'is its human love.' . . . To understand and to feel his poetry aright we must think of him, not as forever floating on gold and emerald plumes somewhere above Mount Abora and feeding on the honey-dew but also as nestling in that cottage at Clevedon or at Nether Stowey with a wife and child, loving the Somerset hills and coombs, rich in friendships, and deeply interested in the great public events of his own time."—*Edward Dowden*.

"That gift of handling the finer passages of human feeling at once with power and delicacy . . . is illustrated by a passage on Friendship."—*Walter Pater*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"He prayeth well who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear God, who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

—*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

"Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,  
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,  
Fill up the interspersèd vacancies  
And momentary pauses of the thought !  
My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart  
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,  
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore  
And in far other scenes !"—*Frost at Midnight*.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
'Tis sweeter far to me,  
To walk together to the kirk  
With a goodly company :

“ To walk together to the kirk,  
 And all together pray,  
 While each to his great Father bends,  
 Old men and babes and loving friends  
 And youths and maidens gay.”

—*Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

**6. Imaginative Beauty—Finish.**—“ Coleridge’s late poems, ‘Youth and Age,’ ‘The Garden of Boccaccio,’ and ‘Work without Hope’ are perfect, flawless, priceless. . . . Of passion Coleridge has nothing; but for height and perfection of imaginative quality he is the greatest of lyric poets. . . . His style, indeed, was a plant of strangely slow growth, but perfect and wonderful in its final flower. . . . Of his best verses I venture to affirm that the world has nothing like them, and can never have; that they are of the highest kind and of their own. . . . His poetry at the highest is beyond all words and all praise of men. He who can define it could unweave a rainbow. He who could praise it aright would be such another as the poet. There is a charm upon these pages [‘Christabel’ and ‘Kubla Khan’] which can only be felt in silent submission of wonder. ‘The Ancient Mariner’ is, without doubt, one of the triumphs of poetry. . . . For its execution, I presume no human ear is too dull to see how perfect it is and how high the kind of perfection. Here is not the speckless and elaborate finish which shows everywhere the fresh rasp of file or chisel on its smooth and spruce excellence; this is faultless after the fashion of a flower or a tree. Thus it has grown; not thus has it been carved. . . . Any separate line has its own heavenly beauty, but to cite separate lines is intolerable. They are to be received in rapture of silence: such a silence as Chapman describes; silence like a god, peaceful and young, which

‘ Left so free mine ears  
 That I might hear the music of the spheres,  
 And all the angels singing out of heaven.’ ”

—*A. C. Swinburne.*

“In poetic quality, above all in that most poetic of all qualities, a keen sense of and delight in beauty, they [‘The Ancient Mariner’ and ‘Christabel’] are quite out of proportion to his other compositions. . . . A warm poetic joy in everything beautiful, whether it be a moral sentiment, like the friendship of Roland or Leoline, or only the flakes of falling light from the water-snakes—this is the predominant quality of the matter of his poetry, as cadence is the predominant quality of its form.”—*Walter H. Pater.*

“He certainly was a main influence in showing the English mind how it could emancipate itself from the vulgarizing tyranny of common sense and in teaching it to recognize in the imagination an important factor not only in the happiness but in the destiny of man. . . . I should find it hard to explain the singular charm of his diction; there is so much nicety of art and purpose in it, whether for music or meaning. Nor does it need any explanation, for we all feel it. . . . Coleridge’s words have the unashamed nakedness of Scripture, of the Eden of diction, ere the voluble serpent entered in. This felicity of speech in Coleridge’s best verse is more remarkable because it was an acquisition. . . . When he is well inspired, as in his best poetry he commonly is, he gives us the very quintessence of perception, the clearly crystallized precipitation of all that is most precious in the ferment of impression after the impertinent and obtrusive particles have evaporated from the memory. It is the pure, visual ecstasy disengaged from the confused and confusing material that gives it birth. It seems the very beatitude of artless simplicity, and is the most finished product of art. . . . What I think constitutes his great power, as it certainly is his greatest charm, is the perpetual presence of imagination. . . . His fancy and his diction would long ago have placed him above all his contemporaries had they been under the direction of a sound judgment and a steady will. . . . He has written some of the most poetical

poetry in the language, and one poem, 'The Ancient Mariner,' not only unparalleled but unapproached in its kind, and that kind of the rarest. . . . This [his imagination] was the lifted torch (to borrow his own words again) that bade the starry walls of passages, dark before to the apprehension of the most intelligent reader, sparkle with lustre, latent in them to be sure, but not all their own. . . . She [imagination] was his lifelong house-mate, if not always hanging over his shoulders and whispering in his ear, yet within easy call, like the Abra of Prior,

'Abra was with him ere he spoke her name;  
And though he called another, Abra came.'

—*Lowell.*

"It would need Coleridge the critic to discover the secrets of the genius of Coleridge the poet. To solve intellectual puzzles in verse . . . is, after all, not difficult; but to find expressions in the language of thought corresponding to pure melody and imaginative loveliness, is a finer exercise of wit. . . . The device of animating the bodies of the dead crew with a troop of seraphs, whether the suggestion is due to St. Paulinus or to Wordsworth, is so conceived and executed as to illustrate admirably Coleridge's power of evoking beauty out of horror. Nor are his strange creatures of the sea those hideous worms which a vulgar dealer in the supernatural might have invented. Seen in a great calm by the light of the moon, these creatures are beautiful in the joy of their life. . . . This ode, 'Recantation,' is remarkable . . . on account of the logic of passion and imagination with which the theme is involved."—*Edward Dowden.*

"Coleridge plainly has the instinct for beauty and the spell of measured words. . . . The marvellous 'Rime,' with its ghostly crew, its spectral seas, its transformation of the elements, is pure and high-sustained imagination. . . . In 'Christabel' both the terror and the loveliness are haunting."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"No man has all the sources of poetry in such profusion."  
—*Sir Walter Scott*.

"His metaphors are often unique and beautiful. . . .  
It may be questioned if any modern writer, whose works are  
equally limited, has illustrated his ideas with more originality  
and interest."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"He robes himself in moonlight and moves among images  
of which we cannot be assured for a while whether they are  
substantial forms of sense or fantastic visions."—*John Foster*.

"No doubt he had imagination enough . . . to have  
furnished forth a thousand poets."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"He has only to draw the slides of his imagination, and a  
thousand subjects expand before him, startling him with their  
brilliancy or losing themselves in endless obscurity. . . .  
It ['The Ancient Mariner'] is unquestionably a work of genius  
—of wild, irregular, overwhelming imagination."—*William  
Hazlitt*.

"They ['The Friend' and 'Aids to Reflection'] excite  
wonder because the processes of the imagination and under-  
standing are continually crossing each other and producing  
magnificent disorder. Visions intermingle with deductions  
and inference follows image. He thinks emotions and feels  
thoughts."—*E. P. Whipple*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"When the bent flower beneath the night-dew weeps  
And on the lake the silver lustre sleeps,  
Amid the paly radiance soft and sad,  
She meets my lonely path in moon-beams clad."  
—*Lines on an Autumnal Evening*.

"The moon shines dim in the open air,  
And not a moonbeam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,

Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
 All made out of the carver's brain,  
 For a lady's chamber meet :  
 The lamp with two-fold silver chain  
 Is fastened to an angel's feet.  
 The silver lamp burns dead and dim ;  
 But Christabel the lamp will trim.  
 She trimmed the lamp and made it bright,  
 And left it swinging to and fro,  
 While Geraldine, in wretched plight,  
 Sank down upon the floor below."—*Christabel*.

"O fair is Love's first hope to gentle mind !  
 As Eve's first star thro' fleecy cloudlet peeping ;  
 And sweeter than the gentle south-west wind,  
 O'er willowy meads and shadowed waters creeping,  
 And Ceres' golden fields ; the sultry hind  
 Meets it with brow uplift, and stays his reaping."

—*First Advent of Love*.

7. **Seriousness — Self-reflection.** — Coleridge wrote concerning his own abilities and convictions as follows :  
 "I have felt, and deeply, that the poet's high functions were not my proper assignment ; that many may be worthy to listen to the strains of Apollo, of the sacred choir, and be able to discriminate and feel and love its genuine harmonies, yet not, therefore, called to receive the harp into their own hands and to join the concert. . . . From my childhood I have had no avarice, no ambition ; my very vanity in my vainest moods was nine-tenths of it the desire and delight and necessity of loving and being loved."

"Always troubled with self-thought in the midst of nature, philosophizing about himself and her, moving off to visit other things than her, the poet can never see nature exactly as she is."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"It was, perhaps, no more than a question of the state of his stomach whether his assiduous interest in himself should result in intellectual pride or in self-abasement."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"In Coleridge we feel already that faintness and obscure dejection which clung like some contagious dampness to all his work. Wordsworth was to be distinguished by a joyful and penetrative conviction of the existence of certain latent affinities between nature and man which reciprocally gild the mind and nature with a kind of heavenly alchemy. . . . In Coleridge's sadder, more purely intellectual cast of genius what with Wordsworth was sentiment or instinct became a philosophical idea or philosophical formula, developed, as much as possible, after the abstract and metaphysical fashion of the transcendental schools of Germany. . . . Perhaps the chief offence in Coleridge is an excess of seriousness, a seriousness arising not from any moral principle but from a misconception of the perfect manner. . . . He has, too, his passages of that sort of impassioned contemplation on the permanent and elementary conditions of nature and humanity which Wordsworth held to be the essence of poetic life. . . . The 'Lines to Joseph Cottle' have the same philosophically imaginative character."—*Walter Pater*.

"Coleridge, as his imaginative impulse flagged, passed into the reflective stage."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"There were, perhaps, in Coleridge some special powers of fine analysis and introvertive speculation which seem to have predestined him for other work than poetry. . . . The poems of these two periods are few altogether, and what there are are more meditative than formerly, sometimes even hopelessly dejected."—*J. C. Shairp*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"What hast thou, Man, that thou dar'st call thine own?  
 What is there in thee, Man, that can be known?  
 Dark fluxion, all unfixable by thought,  
 A phantom dim of past and future wrought,  
 Vain sister of the worm—life, death, soul, clod—  
 Ignore thyself, and strive to know thy God!"

—*Know Thyself*.



" My God ! it is a melancholy thing  
 For such a man, who would full fain preserve  
 His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel  
 For all his human brethren—O my God !  
 It weighs upon the heart, that he must think  
 What uproar and what strife may now be stirring  
 This way or that way o'er these silent hills."

—*Fears in Solitude.*

" My genial spirits fail ;  
 And what can these avail  
 To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?  
 It were a vain endeavor,  
 Though I should gaze forever,  
 On that green light that lingers in the west :  
 I may not hope from outward forms to win  
 The passion and the life whose fountains are within."

—*Dejection : An Ode.*

**8. Assimilation—Imitation.**—" It is remarkable that a poem which impresses us so much as an imaginative unity . . . should in great part have been a compilation from several brains and books. Young Cruikshank, a neighbor of Coleridge at Nether Stowey, had dreamed of a skeleton ship worked by a skeleton crew, and this was the starting-point of the whole. It has been suggested that the blessed spirits who bring the ship to harbor came from one of the epistles of St. Paulinus of Nola, the friend of St. Ambrose. The crime of the old Navigator . . . was Wordsworth's suggestion, derived from Shelvocke's ' Voyage around the World.' Shelvocke describes the insupportable cold of the South Atlantic Ocean and the perpetual squalls of sleet and snow."—*Edward Dowden.*

" Though he has left on the system he inculcated such traces of himself as cannot fail to be left by any mind of original power, he was anticipated in all the essentials of his doctrine by the great Germans of the latter half of the last century, and

was accompanied in it by the remarkable series of their French expositors and followers."—*John Stuart Mill*.

"The 'Hymn to Chamouni' is an expansion of a short poem in stanzas, upon the same subject, by Frederica Brun, a female poet of Germany, previously known to the world under her maiden name of Münter. The mere frame-work of the poem is exactly the same. . . . In 'France' a fine expression or two are from 'Samson Agonistes.'

"It is undeniable that Coleridge was guilty of a serious theft of metaphysical wares. . . . Coleridge . . . persuaded himself that he had really anticipated Schelling's thoughts and might justifiably appropriate Schelling's words."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"The twelfth chapter of his 'Biographia Literaria,' which comes nearer than any other of his writings to being a full statement of his views, is indeed little more than a translation from Schelling."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"No knell that tolled, but filled my anxious eye,  
And suffering Nature wept that one should die."

—*To a Young Lady*.

[Compare Shelley's "Retrospect."]

"When, insupportably advancing,  
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's tramp."

—*France*.

[Compare "Sampson Agonistes."]

[Compare, also, Coleridge's "Song of the Pixies" with Milton's "L'Allegro."]

**9. Unevenness—Confusion.**—"His good work is the scantiest ever done by a man so famous in so long a life; and much of his work is bad. His genius is fluctuant and moon-struck as the sea is. . . . Among all verses of boys who

were to grow up to be great, I remember none so perfect, so sweet and deep in sense and sound as those which he is said to have written at school, headed 'Time, Real and Imaginary;' and following hard on these come a score or two of poems each more feeble and flatulent than the last. [See, for illustration, his 'Lines to a Young Ass.'] His genius walked for some time over much waste ground with irregular and unsure steps. Some poems, touched with exquisite grace, with clear and pure harmony, are tainted with somewhat of feeble and sickly, which impairs our relish. . . . His political verse is most often weak of foot and hoarse of accent. He is like the legendary footless bird of Paradise. . . . Had his wings always held out, it had been well for him and us. Unhappily, this footless creature would perforce too often furl his wings in mid air and try his footing on earth, where his gait was like a swan's on shore. . . . Compare the nerveless and hysterical verses headed 'Fears in Solitude' with the majestic and masculine sonnet of Wordsworth written at the same time on the same subject. The lesser poet [Wordsworth] speaks with a calm force of thought and resolution; Coleridge wails, appeals, deprecates, objurgates in a flaccid and querulous fashion without heart or spirit."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"To many people Coleridge seemed to wander: and he seemed then to wander most when the compass and huge circuit in which his illustrations moved travelled farthest into remote regions before they began to revolve. Long before this coming around commenced most people had lost him and naturally enough supposed he had lost himself. . . . However, I can assert, from my long and intimate knowledge of Coleridge's mind, that logic the most severe was as inalienable from his modes of thought as grammar was from his language."—*De Quincey*.

"If anything imparts unity to his marred life, now soaring high or diving deep, now trailing in the dust with broken wing, it is this, that alike in the glory of his youth and the

dawn of his genius, in the infirmity and conscious self-degradation of his manhood, and amid the lassitude and languor of his latest days, he was always one who loved the light and grew toward it."—*Edward Dowden*.

"Coleridge's creative mood was as brief as it was enrapturing. From his twenty-sixth to his twenty-eighth year he blazed out like Tycho Brahe's star, then sank his light in metaphysics, exhibiting little thenceforth of worth to literature except a criticism of poets and dramatists."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Musical are many of the periods, beautiful the images, and here and there comes a single idea of striking value; but for these we are obliged to hear many discursive exordiums, irrelevant episodes, and random speculations."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"Nothing gave his will force but high-pitched enthusiasm, and with its death the enduring energy of life visited him no more. . . . The weakness of his will was doubled by disease and trebled by opium. . . . There is no lesson so solemn in the whole range of modern poetry—genius without will—religion without strength—hope without perseverance—art without the power of finish. . . . The volume we have from him influences us with all the sadness that a garden does in which two or three plants rise and flower perfectly, but in which the rest are choked with weeds or run to seed."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Strong as is his pinion, his flight seems to resemble rather that of the eaglet than of the full-grown eagle, even to the last."—*H. D. Traill*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"This day among the faithful placed  
And fed with fontal manna;  
O with maternal title graced,  
Dear Anna's dearest Anna!

" While others wish thee wise and fair,  
 A maid of spotless fame,  
 I'll breathe this more compendious prayer—  
 May'st thou deserve thy name !  
 . . . . .

" So, when her tale of days all flown,  
 Thy mother shall be missed here ;  
 When Heaven at length shall claim its own  
 And angels snatch their sister."

—*On the Christening of a Friend's Child.*

" Why need I say, Louisa dear !  
 How glad I am to see you here,  
 A lovely convalescent ;  
 Risen from the bed of pain and fear  
 And feverish heat incessant.

" The sunny showers, the dappled sky,  
 The little birds that warble high,  
 Their vernal loves commencing,  
 Will better welcome you than I  
 With their sweet influencing.

" Believe me, while in bed you lay,  
 Your danger taught us all to pray :  
 You made us grow devouter !  
 Each eye looked up and seemed to say,  
 How can we do without her."

—*To a Young Lady.*

" Mark this holy chapel well !  
 The birth-place, this, of William Tell.  
 Here, where stands God's altar dread,  
 Stood his parent's marriage-bed.

" Here, first, an infant to her breast,  
 Him his loving mother prest ;  
 And kissed the babe, and blessed the day,  
 And prayed as mothers used to pray.  
 . . . . .

“ To Nature and to Holy Writ  
 Alone did God the boy commit :  
 Where flashed and roared the torrent, oft  
 His soul found wings, and soared aloft !

“ The straining oar and chamois chase  
 Had formed his limbs to strength and grace :  
 On wave and wind the boy would toss,  
 Was great, nor knew how great he was !”

— *Tell's Birthplace.*

✓ **II. Abstraction—Obscurity—Lack of Logical Sequence.**—“ His intense and overwrought abstraction, that sensuous fluctuation of soul, that floating fervor of fancy, whence his poetry rose as from a shifting sea, in faultless completion of form and charm, had absorbed—if indeed there were any to absorb—all emotion of love or faith, all heroic beauty of moral passion, all inner and outer life of the only kind possible to such other poets as Dante or Shelley, Milton or Hugo. . . . Want of self-command left him often to the mercy of a caprice which swept him through tangled and tortuous ways of thought, through brakes and byways of fancy, where the solid subject in hand was either utterly lost and thrown over, or so transmuted and transfigured that any recognition of it was as hopeless as any profit. . . . In an essay well worth translating out of jargon into some human language, he speaks of the ‘ holy jungle of human metaphysics.’ Out of that holy and pestilential jungle he emerged but too rarely into sunlight and clear air.”—*A. C. Swinburne.*

“ An infirm will, a dreamy ideality, a preternatural subtlety of thought and intense religious susceptibility were thrown among a people eminently practical and prosaic, impatient of romance, indifferent to intellectual refinements, strict in their moral expectations, scrupulous of the veracities, but afraid of the fervors of devotion.”—*James Martineau.*

“ We see no sort of difference between his published and

his unpublished compositions. It is just as impossible to get at the meaning of the one as the other. . . . Each several work exists only in the imagination of the author, and is quite inaccessible to the understandings of his readers. . . . This work ["The Friend"] is so obscure that it has been supposed to be written in cypher, and that it is necessary to read it upwards and downwards, or backwards and forwards, as it happens, to make head or tail of it. . . . His talk was excellent if you let him start from no premises and come to no conclusion."—*William Hazlitt*.

"You could not call this aimless, cloud-capt, cloud-bound lawlessly meandering discourse by the name of excellent talk. . . . The moaning sing-song of that theosophico-metaphysicalo monotony left you at last with a very dreary feeling. . . . Coleridge talked with musical energy two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist, and communicated no meaning whatsoever to any individual of his hearers. . . . You swam and fluttered on in the mistiest wide unintelligible deluge of things, for the most part in a rather profitless, uncomfortable manner."—*Carlyle*.

"He considered that the object of poetry was to excite subtle trains of imaginative association; but he was not satisfied, like Wordsworth, with simply analyzing the impressions of his own mind. . . . His genius was of far too weird and romantic an order to succeed in romantic poetry. . . . I think it is evident that he began to reason on the subtle affinities between sound and sense and to perceive that isolated romantic images might be so linked together by mere metrical movement as to produce the effect of unity which the mind requires in an ideal creation. . . . He resolved, in fact, deliberately, to compose as a musician. . . . So little does the effect of Coleridge's poetry depend on the logical sequence of ideas that of his four really characteristic poems three are fragments and one is said to have been composed in a dream; while 'The Ancient Mariner' was founded

on the dream of a friend. . . . The effect, both in 'The Ancient Mariner' and in 'Christabel,' is produced by the combination of isolated, weird, and romantic images in a strange elfin metre. . . . His love of metaphysics induced him to believe that he could penetrate behind the veil of sense and establish a transcendental basis for the law of the association of ideas."—*W. J. Courthope*.

"I cannot help being reminded of the partiality he often betrays for clouds. . . . 'The Ancient Mariner' is marvellous in its mastery over that delightfully fortuitous inconsequence that is the adamantine logic of dreamland."—*Lowell*.

"The subtle-souled psychologist."—*Shelley*.

"Even 'Christabel' is a figure somewhat too faintly drawn. . . . All his other imaginings of women are exquisite abstractions, framed of purely feminine elements, but representing woman rather than being themselves veritable women. . . . In Coleridge's first volume of verse he had styled a considerable number of the pieces 'Effusions.' . . . The poet, in these effusions, places himself in some environment of beauty, submits his mind to the suggestions of the time and place, falls as it were of free will into a reverie, in which the thoughts and images meander stream-like at their own pleasure, or rather as if the power of volition were suspended and the current must needs follow the line of least resistance; then, as if by good luck, comes the culmination of some soft subsidence, and the poem ceases. In the earlier odes . . . there is indeed an evolution, but it proceeds sometimes by those fits and starts which were supposed to prove in writers of the ode a kind of Pindaric excitement. . . . The sequences of thought and feeling in these earlier poems are often either of the meditative-meandering or the spasmodic-passionate kind."—*Edward Dowden*.

"The restless activity of Coleridge's mind in chasing abstract truths and burying himself in the dark places of human



speculation seemed to me, in a great measure, an attempt to escape out of his own personal wretchedness."—*De Quincey*.

"[He] frequently changed his mind, and . . . certainly appears to thinkers of a different order to add obscurity even to subjects which are necessarily obscure."—*Leslie Stephen*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts  
Unfeeling of our universal Sire,  
And that in his vast family no Cain  
Injures uninjured (in her best-aimed blow  
Victorious murder a blind suicide)  
Haply for this some younger angel now  
Looks down on human nature : and, behold !  
A sea of blood bestrewed with wrecks, where mad  
Embattled interests on each other rush  
With unhelmed rage !"—*Religious Musings*.

" Verse, a Breeze 'mid blossoms straying,  
Where HOPE clung feeding, like a bee—  
Both were mine ! Life went a maying  
With NATURE, HOPE, and POESY,  
When I was young !  
*When I was young ?—Ah, woeful WHEN !*  
Ah for the Change 'twixt Now and Then !  
This breathing House not built with hands,  
This body that does me grievous wrong,  
O'er æry Cliffs and glittering Sands,  
How lightly then it flashed along :—  
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,  
On winding Lakes and Rivers wide,  
That ask no aid of Sail or Oar,  
That fear no spite of Wind or Tide !"

—*Youth and Age*.

" But properties are God : the naked mass  
(If mass there be, fantastic guest or ghost)  
Acts only by its inactivity.

Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think  
 That as one body seems the aggregate  
 Of atoms numberless, each organized ;  
 So by a strange and dim similitude  
 Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds  
 Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs  
 With absolute ubiquity of thought  
 (His one eternal self-affirming act!)  
 All his involved Monads, that yet seem  
 With various province and apt agency  
 Each to pursue its own self-centring end."

—*The Destiny of Nations.*

**12. Erudition—Intellectuality.**—Hazlitt, who hated Coleridge as a politician and assailed him virulently, declared, "He is the only person I ever knew who answered to the idea of a man of genius. . . . His mind was clothed with wings, and, lifted on them, he raised philosophy to Heaven." Dr. Arnold called Coleridge "more of a great man than any one who has lived within the four seas in this generation."

"The largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and the most comprehensive, that has yet existed among men. . . . He spun daily and at all hours, for mere amusement of his own activities and from the loom of his own magical brain, theories . . . such as Schelling—no, nor any German that ever breathed, not John Paul—could have emulated in his dreams. . . . Coleridge was armed, at all points, with the scholastic erudition which bore upon all questions that could arise in polemic divinity."—*De Quincey.*

"He was a mighty poet and  
 A subtle-souled psychologist ;  
 All things he seemed to understand,  
 Of old or new, on sea or land,  
 Save his own soul, which was a mist."

—*Charles Lamb.*

"All other men whom I have ever known are mere children to him."—*Southey*.

"Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply in the opinions and mental tendencies of those among us who attempt to enlighten their practice by philosophical meditation. . . . No one has done more to shape the opinions of those among England's younger men who may be said to have any opinions at all. . . . He has been the great awakener in this country of the spirit of philosophy within the bounds of traditional opinion. . . . These two [Bentham and Coleridge] agreed in being the men who, in their age and country, did most to enforce by precept and example the necessity of a philosophy. They agreed in making it their occupation to recall opinions to first principles."—*John Stuart Mill*.

"Coleridge's thought may almost be said to be as wide as life. . . . There were perhaps . . . some special powers of fine analysis and introvertive speculation, which seem to have predestined him for other work than poetry. . . . Are they mistaken who see in the unearthly weirdness of 'The Ancient Mariner,' and the mysterious witchery of 'Christabel' those very mental elements in solution which, condensed and turned inward, would find their most congenial place in 'the exhausting atmosphere of transcendental ideas?' . . . His eye flashed with a lightning glance from the most abstract truth to the minutest practical detail and back again from this to the abstract principle. . . . When once his mental powers begin to work, their movements are on a vastness of scale and with a many-sidedness of view, which, if they render him hard to follow, make him also stimulative and suggestive of thought beyond all other modern writers. . . . His mind was a very treasure-house of ideas. . . . These [Juvenile Poems] mark, perhaps, the tumult of his thick-thronging thoughts, struggling to utter themselves with force and freshness, yet

not quite disengaged from the old commonplaces of poetic diction, 'eve's dusky car' and such like, and from those frigid personifications of abstract qualities in which the former age delighted."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"Since Shakespeare and Milton we have had nothing at all comparable to him."—*Walter Savage Landor*.

"His mind is learned in all the learning of the Egyptians as well as the Greeks and Romans; and though we have heard simpletons say that he knows nothing of science, we have heard him in Chemistry puzzle Sir Humphry Davy and prove to his own satisfaction that Leibnitz and Newton, though good men, were but indifferent astronomers. . . . If there be any man of great and original genius alive at this moment in Europe, it is S. T. Coleridge. . . . His is one of the most deeply musing spirits that ever breathed forth its influence in the majestic language of England."—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

"Instead, like Wordsworth, of seeking the sources of sublimity in the simplest elements of humanity, he ranges through all history and science, investigating all that has really existed and all that has had foundation only in the wildest and strangest minds. . . . The term 'myriad-minded,' which he has happily applied to Shakespeare, is truly descriptive of himself. . . . The riches of his mind were developed not in writing but in his speech—conversation I can scarcely call it—which no one who once heard can ever forget. Unable to work in solitude, he sought the gentle stimulus of social admiration, and under its influence poured forth without stint the marvellous resources of a mind rich in the spoils of time—richer far in its own glorious imagination and delicate fancy."—*T. N. Talfourd*.

"I have known many men who have done wonderful things, but the most wonderful man I ever knew was Coleridge."—*Wordsworth*.

"Thus each thought that was to have been only one

thought, and to have transmitted the reader's mind immediately forward, becomes an exceeding complex combination of thought, almost a dissertation in miniature, and thus our journey to the assigned end (if, indeed, we are carried so far, which is not always the case) becomes nothing less than a visit of inspection to every garden, manufactory, museum, and antiquity situated near the road throughout its whole length. . . . Or if we might compare the series of ideas in a composition to a military line, we should say that many of the author's images are supernumerarily attended by so many related but secondary and subordinate ideas, that the array of thought has some resemblance to what that military line would be if many of the men, veritable and brave soldiers, stood in the ranks surrounded by their wives and children. . . . His are the most extraordinary faculties I have ever yet seen resident in a form of flesh and blood."

—*John Forster.*

"Samuel Taylor Coleridge was like the Rhine, 'that exulting and abounding river;' he was full of words, full of thoughts; yielding both in an unfailing flow that delighted many and perplexed a few of his hearers. He was a man of prodigious and miscellaneous reading, always willing to communicate all he knew. . . . From Alpha to Omega all was familiar to him. . . . He went from flower to flower throughout the whole garden of learning, like the butterfly or the bee—most like the bee. . . . He was so full of information that it was a relief to him to part with some of it to others. . . . I imagine that no man had ever read so many books and at the same time had digested so much."

—*B. W. Procter.*

"The ardor, delicacy, energy of his intellect, his resolute desire to get at the roots of things and deeper yet, if deeper might be, will always enchant and attract all spirits of like mould and temper."—*A. C. Swinburne.*

"The molten material of his mind, too abundant for the

capacity of the mould, overflowed it in fiery gushes of fiery excess. . . . They [his associates] all thought of him what Scott said of him, 'No man has all the resources of poetry in such profusion.' "—*Lowell*.

## ILLUSTRATION.

"As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapory head  
The Laplander beholds the far-off sun  
Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,  
While yet the stern and solitary night  
Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn  
With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,  
Guiding his course or by Niemi lake  
Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone  
Of Solfar-kapper, while the snowy blast  
Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,  
Making the poor babe at its mother's back  
Scream in its scanty cradle : he the while  
Wins gentle solace as with upward eye  
He marks the streamy banners of the North,  
Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join  
Who there in floating robes of rosy light  
Dance sportively."—*The Destiny of Nations*.

## WORDSWORTH, 1770-1850

**Biographical Outline.**—William Wordsworth, born at Cockermouth, England, April 7, 1770; father an attorney and agent to Sir James Lowther, afterward Lord Lonsdale; mother the daughter of a mercer of Westmoreland; Wordsworth's boyhood is passed partly at Cockermouth and partly with his mother's parents at Penrith; he records of himself that, as a child, he was of "a stiff, moody, and violent temper," and that he once seriously contemplated suicide on being checked for some boyish error; during his early boyhood he read "all of Fielding's works, 'Don Quixote,' 'Gil Blas,' and any part of Swift that I liked—'Gulliver's Travels' and 'The Tale of a Tub' being both much to my taste;" in his ninth year Wordsworth is sent to a school at Hawkshead; his first verses are written as school task-work, and are entitled "Summer Vacation;" to these he adds voluntarily other verses on "The Return to School;" in his fifteenth year he wins the admiration of his fellow-pupils by writing verses in honor of the second centenary of the Hawkshead school, which was founded in 1585 by Archbishop Sandys; Wordsworth afterward called these youthful verses "a tame imitation of Pope's versification and a little in his style;" during his school-days he is profoundly impressed by the majestic scenery about him in the vicinity of Hawkshead; after his father's death, in 1783, Wordsworth is placed under the care of two uncles, who enable him to continue his education; an estate of £5,000, which belonged to his father, had been seized by Lord Lonsdale, and it was not till that nobleman's death, in 1801, after most of the remaining fortune of the family had been spent in litigation over the matter, that it was recovered;

meantime the poet's uncles recognize the talent of the young man and his brother Christopher (afterward master of Trinity College, Cambridge), and give to each a course at the University of Cambridge.

Wordsworth enters St. John's College, Cambridge, in October, 1787, thus becoming a successor of Spenser, Dryden, Ben Jonson, Milton, and Gray, and a predecessor of Carlyle and Byron—all Cambridge men; the tranquil atmosphere and the noble associations of Cambridge deeply affect the young poet; he spends his first long college vacation at Hawkshead, where he develops "a somewhat closer interest in the joys and sorrows of the villagers;" his second long vacation is spent at Penrith with that sister who was to be his life-long companion, critic, and friend; his third college summer is spent with his friend Jones in a walking tour through Switzerland—an experience narrated later in his "Prelude" and then as rare as it is now common among young collegians; he is graduated, B.A., from Cambridge in June, 1791, and leaves the university with no fixed plans for the future; he first goes to London, and spends some time in walking about the streets of the metropolis, studying the types of humanity found there; from this London sojourn result the "Reverie of Poor Susan" and the "Sonnet on Westminster Bridge;" in November, 1791, Wordsworth lands in France, passes through Paris (then in the throes of the French Revolution), and settles at Orleans to study the French language; he spends nearly a year at Orleans and at Blois; he returns as far as Paris in October, 1792, and thinks seriously of entering the struggle as a leader of the Girondists, but his uncles compel him, by stopping his supply of funds, to return to England late in 1792; during 1792 he publishes two poems, "The Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Essays," and thus attracts the attention of Coleridge, though the poems are not otherwise noticed; being at heart a democrat, Wordsworth is seriously disturbed when England declares war against the French republic; in



1795 his gifted sister becomes his permanent companion, and the poet finds in her society much solace; during this year, on the death of Raisley Calvert, a friend whom Wordsworth had tenderly nursed while he was dying of consumption, the poet receives a bequest of £900.

In the autumn of 1795 he settles with his sister in a snug cottage at Racedown, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire; he records afterward that he and his sister lived for seven or eight years on the interest of the £900 plus a legacy of £100 that his sister had received and about £100 that he had received from his "Lyrical Ballads;" while at Racedown Wordsworth completes his "Guilt and Sorrow," and writes his tragedy, "The Borderers" and also "The Ruined Cottage," afterward embodied in the "Excursion;" the poem last named is warmly praised by Coleridge, who visits the Wordsworths at Racedown in June, 1797; in July, 1797, they remove to Alfoxden, a large house in Somersetshire, near Netherstowey, where Coleridge was then living; here Wordsworth increases his income by taking as a pupil a young son of Basil Montagu, and here he writes many of his shorter poems; during a brief excursion among the Cumberland hills, in the autumn of 1797, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and his sister collaborate in planning "The Ancient Mariner," which Coleridge afterward puts into form; Wordsworth is said to have suggested the well-known incident of the albatross and the navigation of the ship by dead men; in the autumn of 1797 was published the volume of poems by Wordsworth and Coleridge called "Lyrical Ballads;" besides the trivial poems of Wordsworth that have been so severely and justly criticised, this volume contained "Lines Written above Tintern Abbey," a poem written at Tintern Abbey in a single day during 1798, and now generally recognized as the author's greatest short poem.

Soon after the publication of the "Lyrical Ballads" Wordsworth and his sister sail for Germany, and spend four months at Goslar, near the Hartz forest, for the purpose of

perfecting themselves in the knowledge of the German language; while at Goslar Wordsworth writes "Lucy Gray," "Ruth," "Nutting," "The Poet's Epitaph," and others of his best short poems; on the day when he leaves Goslar he begins a long poem describing the development of his own mind, addressed to Coleridge and written as a confidential communication between intimate friends; this poem was not published till after Wordsworth's death, when his wife named it "The Prelude;" he finishes "The Prelude" in 1805, and designs it as an introduction to a projected poem to be called "The Recluse," of which only the second division—"The Excursion"—has ever been published, though Wordsworth wrote one book of the first part; the material gathered for the third part of "The Recluse" was afterward incorporated into the poet's other works; returning to the Lake country in the spring of 1799, he becomes remarkably familiar with the district and its people; his biographer asserts that "there was scarcely a mile of territory in the Lake country over which he had not wandered;" the summits of Coniston and Esthwaite suggest to him many of his finest poetic flights, but the lakes of Grasmere and Rydal form the centre of his life and wanderings; his relation to the Cumberland scenery appears especially in his "Poems on the Naming of Places;" two of the "Evening Voluntaries" were composed by the side of Rydal Mere, and "The Wild Duck's Nest" was on one of the Rydal islands; soon after his return from Germany Wordsworth settles, with his sister, at Townend, Grasmere; on October 4, 1802, he is married to Miss Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith, a simple village maiden without the advantages of the schools, but herself a true poet in feeling and expression; Wordsworth records that his wife was the author of the two following lines of "The Daffodils:"

" They flash upon that inward eye  
That is the bliss of solitude."

The life of the Wordsworths at Townend is even less luxurious than that of the peasants about them, and fully illustrates "plain living and high thinking;" they have "a boat upon the lake and a small orchard and smaller garden," but their parlor is floored with stone, and their only servant an old woman of sixty; here Wordsworth continues his intimacy with Coleridge, and the latter poet, with his family, is often a member of Wordsworth's household for months together; during 1802 Wordsworth writes "The Daffodils" and the sonnets on "Westminster Bridge" and "Calais Sands;" in 1803 he makes a tour through Scotland with his sister, and writes "The Highland Girl;" during the same year he forms a friendship with Sir George Beaumont, a wealthy nobleman of Essex, and Beaumont presents him with "a beautiful piece of land" at Applethwaite under Skiddaw, hoping thus to induce Wordsworth to settle there near their mutual friend Coleridge; this friendship of Wordsworth with Beaumont, who was himself a poet and a landscape-painter, lasted till that nobleman's death in 1827, and the intercourse was of much service to Wordsworth in developing his appreciation of art. During the year 1800 the poet's brother John, captain of an East Indiaman, had spent eight months with him at Grasmere, and the two brothers had become deeply attached to each other after years of separation; the drowning of this brother, with all on board his ship, in 1805, and the loss of two children in 1812, tend to sadden the later years and later poetry of Wordsworth; five children in all were born to him in Grasmere; in the spring of 1808 he removes to a larger house called Allan Bank at the north end of Grasmere, and thence, in 1811, to the Parsonage at Grasmere; his poem "The Triad" describes his daughter Dora, while his other daughter, Catherine, is described in several of his sonnets; his passionate love of liberty and his high sense of national honor appear in his sonnets dedicated "To Liberty," written from 1802 to 1816, and in his prose tract on "The Convention of Cintra," written in 1808.

In January, 1813, the Wordsworths remove to their permanent home at Rydal Mount, where the poet remains till his death; about this time, through the interest of Lord Lonsdale, Wordsworth is appointed distributor of stamps for the county of Westmoreland, and to this office is added soon afterward the same post for Cumberland; he enjoyed the revenue from these offices till 1842, when it was transferred to his son; later Wordsworth refused an offer of the more lucrative office of collector of the port at Whitehaven, refusing to "exchange his sabine villa for a load of care;" among his near neighbors at Rydal Mount are De Quincey, Southey, Professor Wilson ("Christopher North"), Dr. Arnold of Rugby, and Hartley Coleridge, and he is much in their society; many of the passages in Wordsworth's poems are really photographs of his neighbors, and "The Waggoner" is a picture of what the poet imagined that he himself might have been under like circumstances; although his poems are greeted with more ridicule than has ever been given, perhaps, to any others, Wordsworth never loses his calm assurance and his confidence in the superiority of his work; while this mental attitude saves him from much suffering, it prevents that improvement which he might have made through a proper recognition of the value of honest criticism on his work; he is more sensitive, however, to the pecuniary results of the ridicule; in 1820, when he is fifty years old, and after he has been writing for twenty-five years, he confesses: "The whole of my returns from my writing trade have not amounted to seven score pounds;" "The Excursion" appears in 1814, and in 1815 Wordsworth republishes his minor poems, introducing the volume with a preface and a supplementary essay on the theory of poetry—an essay since widely known and highly estimated.

In the summer of 1820, with his wife and sister, he makes a tour of France and Italy; in 1823 he travels in Holland, and in 1824 in North Wales; in 1828 he is in Belgium with Coleridge, and in 1829 in Ireland; in 1831 he visits Scott at Ab-

botsford, just before the departure of the great novelist for Italy in search of health; during this visit Scott goes with Wordsworth to Yarrow, and the incident gives rise to the poem "Yarrow Revisited" and the sonnet beginning "A trouble not of clouds nor weeping rain;" in 1833 Wordsworth makes another tour in Scotland, and in 1837 a longer one through Italy, with Crabbe Robinson; in 1842 he publishes "Poems, Chiefly of Early and Later Years," including "Ecclesiastical Sketches," a series of sonnets begun in 1821; the impairment of his sister's mental faculties, his own severe illness in 1832, and the gradual decline in the mental powers of his friend Coleridge sadden the poet's last years; between 1830 and 1840 he "passes from the apostle of a clique into the most illustrious man of letters in England;" an American edition of his poems appears in 1837, and Oxford confers upon him the degree of D.C.L. in 1839; in October, 1842, he is granted an annuity of £300 from the civil list "for distinguished literary merit;" on the death of Southey, in March, 1843, Wordsworth is offered the laureateship, which he at first declines as "imposing duties which I cannot undertake;" but, on being assured by the Lord Chamberlain that the nomination does not imply the imposition of any duties, but is given rather as "that tribute of respect which is justly due to the first of living poets," he accepts the laureateship, and "fills the office for seven years with quiet dignity;" his only compositions of any importance after becoming laureate are his two prose letters protesting against the projected Kendal and Windermere railway through the Lake District; he never recovers from the shock caused by the death, in 1847, of Dora, his only daughter who survived childhood; he dies at Rydal Mount, April 23, 1850.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

1. **Severe Simplicity.**—"Wordsworth's true simplicity, the simplicity which was the natural vehicle of his grand and solemn thoughts, the simplicity which came from writing close to the truth of things and making the word rise out of the thought conceived, cannot be too much commended. . . . They [the poems] combine depth of insight with a most exquisite simplicity of phrase. . . . Worldlings may sneer at the simplicity of some of his delineations of rural life, but they contain descriptions which for simplicity and truth . . . can hardly be excelled."—*E. P. Whipple*.



"Our language owes him for the habitual purity and abstinence of his style, and we who speak it for having emboldened us to take delight in simple things and to trust ourselves to our own instincts. . . . Wordsworth's better utterances have the bare sincerity . . . that belongs to the grand simplicities of the Bible. . . . Certainly a great part of him will perish, but because too easily understood."—*Lowell*.

"He chooses low and rustic life, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. . . . He has a predilection for a style the most remote from the false and showy splendor which he wished to explode, an austere purity of language, both grammatically and logically. . . . No other man has so steadily asserted the dignity of virtue and of simplicity."—*Coleridge*.

"He chooses to depict people of humble life because, being nearer to nature, they are on the whole more impassioned."—*Walter Pater*.

"What is most precious in our common human nature seemed to him to be whatever is most simple, primitive, and permanent. . . . What is best in language are those simple, stirring, and living forms of speech."—*Edward Dowden*.

"No poet ever drew from simpler sources than Wordsworth, but none ever made so much out of so little. . . . He can deal with facts only when they are simple enough to embody but a single idea. . . . His 'plain imagination and severe,' as he himself calls it."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"There is in them [Wordsworth's poems] the freshness, the ethereality, the innocent brightness of a new-born day."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"It was his theory of poetic diction that it should be that which men commonly use when in rustic life they express themselves simply. . . . I cannot but think that the element of grandeur of style flowed largely from the solemn simplicity."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"The result [of Wordsworth's effort] was full of simplicity, sincerity, beneficence. . . . His purpose was to bring men's minds back to simplicity in subject and language. . . . The simplicity of his subjects and of his manner, too, passes into triviality—the simplicity of his style into poverty. . . . He undertook the mission of rehabilitating simplicity, as well in tone as in feeling. . . . Never has there been expressed as a whole with such puissant simplicity . . . sentiments which Nature awakes."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"Wordsworth owed much to Burns and to a style of perfect plainness. . . . He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere naturalness."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"His works are matchless for their power and simplicity and noble beauty. . . . Wordsworth has a fearless reliance on the simple forces of expression in contrast to the more ornate ones. . . . He accepted it as his mission to open the eyes and widen the thoughts of his countrymen and to teach them to discern in the humblest and most unexpected forms the presence of what was kindred to what they had long recognized as the highest and greatest."—*R. W. Church*.

"There is no studied phrase-making, no falsetto, . . . all simple and pure soul. . . . He gladly returns to the simple produce of the common day. . . . Wordsworth used the language of common life. . . . The language is so clear and simple that a child may understand it, yet so pure and true that the ripest minds can hardly fail to relish it. . . . His is a style of beauty which is most adorned by being wholly unadorned. . . . Strong was his passion for severe purity and solidity of form."—*H. N. Hudson*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"From his sixth year the boy of whom I speak  
In summer tended cattle on the hills;  
But through the inclement and the perilous days

Of long-continuing winter he repaired,  
Equipped with satchel, to a school that stood  
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,  
Remote from view of city spire or sound  
Of minster clock. From that bleak tenement  
He many an evening to his distant home  
In solitude returning, saw the hills  
Grow larger in the darkness ; all alone,  
Beheld the stars come out above his head,  
And travelled through the wood with no one near  
To whom he might confess the things he saw."

—*The Excursion.*

" The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink ;  
I heard a voice ; it said, ' Drink, pretty creature, drink !'  
And looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied  
A snow-white mountain lamb with a maiden at its side.

" Nor sheep nor kine were near ; the lamb was all alone,  
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;  
With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel  
While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening meal."

—*The Pet Lamb.*

" It was a dreary morning when the wheels  
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,  
And nothing cheered our way till first we saw  
The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift  
Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,  
Extended high above a dusky grove.  
Advancing, we espied upon the road  
A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap  
Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,  
Or covetous of exercise and air ;  
He passed—nor was I master of my eyes  
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.  
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,  
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force."

—*Residence at Cambridge.*

**2. Profound Meditation—Contemplation.**—"The predominating characteristic of Wordsworth's mind is thoughtfulness, a thoughtfulness in which every faculty of his mind and every disposition of his heart meet and mingle; and the result is an atmosphere of thought, giving a soft charm to all the objects it surrounds and permeates. . . . The most common exercise of his imagination is what we may call its meditative action—its still, calm, searching insight into spiritual truth and into the spirit of nature. In these, analysis and reflection become imaginative, and the 'more than reasoning mind' of the poet overleaps the bound of positive knowledge. . . . He is not, in this meditative mood, a mere moralizing dreamer, a vague and puerile rhapsodist, as some have maliciously asserted, but a true poetic philosopher. . . . The intensity with which Wordsworth meditates has done much to give him a reputation as a reasoner. . . . His nature is rather contemplative than impulsive."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"One lesson, if men must have lessons, he conveys more clearly than all, the supreme importance of contemplation in the conduct of life. . . . Contemplation, impassioned contemplation—that is with Wordsworth the end in itself, the perfect end. . . . And the meditative poet is, in reality, only clearing the scene for the exhibition of emotion."—*Walter Pater*.

"Meditation and sympathy were the two main strings of his serene and stormless lyre. . . . He could fill his meditation with the spirit of a whole people."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"His imagination is most active when it is pervaded by a calm yet intense and lofty spirit of meditation. . . . Meditation, imagination, and description bear everywhere the impress of his own individuality, and appear to be the characteristics of his poems. . . . He is not merely a melodious writer or a powerful utterer of deep emotion but a

true philosopher. . . . Wordsworth's meditations upon flowers or animal life are impressive because they have been touched by this constant sympathy. . . . He finds lonely meditation so inspiring that he is too indifferent to the troubles of less clear-sighted human beings."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Wordsworth's poetry is great in thought. . . . He himself has told us that his paramount aim was to be a philosophic poet. . . . He was a man of high philosophic thought and high moral purpose. . . . He is England's great philosophic, as Shakespeare is her great dramatic, and Milton her great epic, poet. . . . With what unpremeditated grace he could suggest his philosophy in connection with everyday objects!"—*Aubrey De Vere*.

"Though his poetry reads so transcendental, and is so meditative, there never was a poet who was so little of a dreamer as Wordsworth. . . . He uses human sorrow as an influence to stir up his own meditative spirit. . . . Contemplative as he was, his mind was too concentrated and intense for general truth. . . . The ballads are not understood unless . . . one enters into the contemplative tone in which they were written."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"The essence of Wordsworth's mind in poetry is contemplative imagination. . . . He is a meditative and intensive poet—as such admirable, perhaps unequalled."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"He is first and foremost a philosophical thinker; a man whose intention and purpose of life it was to think out for himself, faithfully and seriously, the questions concerning 'Man and Nature and Human Life.' . . . He is as much in earnest as a prophet, and he holds himself as responsible for obedience to its [the divine voice's] call and for its fulfilment as a prophet."—*R. W. Church*.

"Wordsworth was encumbered, as it were, by reflectiveness of manner."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"Few have ventured to send into the world essentially meditative poems, which none but the thoughtful can enjoy."  
—*T. N. Talfourd*.

"He is given to meditation, and much contemptuous of the unmeditative world and its noisy nothingness."—*Carlyle*.

"Even the name of thinker but half suits him, he is the contemplative man."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"He is essentially a man of inner feelings, that is, engrossed by the concerns of the soul. . . . The peace was so great within him and around him that he could perceive the imperceptible."—*Taine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Absence and death, how differ they? and how  
Shall I admit that nothing can restore  
What one short sigh so easily removed?  
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought—  
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,  
O teach me calm submission to thy will!"

—*Maternal Grief*.

"Weak is the will of man, his judgment blind;  
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;  
Heavy is woe;—and joy, for human-kind,  
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!  
Thus might he paint our lot of mortal days  
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned  
To elevate the more-than-reasoning mind  
And color life's dark cloud with orient rays.  
Imagination is that sacred power,  
Imagination lofty and refined:  
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower  
Of faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind  
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,  
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind."

—*Sonnets*.

" Yet may we not entirely overlook  
 The pleasure gathered from the rudiments  
 Of geometric science. Though advanced  
 In these inquiries, with regret I speak,  
 No farther than the threshold, there I found  
 Both elevation and composed delight :  
 With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased  
 With its own struggles, did I meditate  
 On the relation those abstractions bear  
 To Nature's laws, and by what process led,  
 Those immaterial agents bow their heads  
 Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man ;  
 From star to star, from sphere to kindred sphere,  
 From system on to system without end."

—*The Prelude.*

### ✓ 3. Love of Nature—Appreciative Sympathy.—

" Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple elementary affections and duties, and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy and renders it so as to make us share it."—*Matthew Arnold.*

" It certainly was a great advance from Pope for a poet to have ' an appetite and a passion ' for external nature. . . . The originality of the ' Lyrical Ballads ' consisted not so much in an accurate observation of Nature as in an absolute communion with her and an interpretation of the spirit of her forms. . . . We have here that spiritualization of nature, that mysterious sense of the Being pervading the whole universe of matter and mind, that feeling of the vital connection between all the various forms and kinds of creation. . . . Wordsworth's nature grew to its spiritual stature by placing his mind in direct contact with natural objects, passively receiving their impressions in the still hours of contemplation, and bringing his own soul into such sweet relations to the soul of nature as to ' see into the life of things.' The poet

tells us that the forms and colors of nature affected his youth with 'dizzy raptures and aching joys'—that they were to him 'as an appetite, and haunted him like a passion.' . . . It is by the exercise of this power [the interpretative instinct] that he spanned, as he believed, the gulf—deep, wide, and bottomless as science makes it—which separates man from Nature. Nature's forms interpret him to himself; her symbols express his subtlest thoughts; she has correspondences for his most soaring aspirations, affinities for his most elevated moods, answers for his deepest questionings. She explains to him his own significance, and as with arrowy glance he passes from grade to grade among the forms of nature, stripping from each its accidents till his eye rests on its essential life, he grasps her unity in the midst of her diversity; he sees in her what, from analogy to himself, he calls a soul; he receives mystic hints of personality; he catches flashes from a living will akin to his own. . . . He starts from the instinctive feeling of childhood, the simple gladness mingled with vague fear in the presence of Nature. . . . When instinct becomes reason and impulse principle, when the relationship is consciously and intellectually realized, when, that is, Wordsworth perceives the reciprocal influence which he and Nature exercise over each other, these unconscious feelings pass into love."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"The ideal light which Wordsworth sheds but brings out only more vividly the real heart of Nature, the innermost feeling which is really there, and is recognized by Wordsworth's eye in virtue of the kinship between Nature and his own soul. . . . He was baptized with an effluence from on high, consecrated to be the poet-priest of Nature's mysteries. . . . Even before school-time was past, Nature had come to have a meaning and an attraction for him. . . . And Wordsworth alone, adding the philosopher to the poet, has speculated widely and deeply on the relation in which Nature stands to the soul of man."—*J. C. Shairp*.



"He is not, and never can be, the world's poet, but the poet of those who love solitude and solitary communion with nature. . . . In Wordsworth's love, nature is not second but first; the poetic rill with him rises in the mountains."—*T. N. Talfourd*.

"This love of the nature to which he belongs, and which is in him the fruit of wisdom and experience, gives to all of his poetry a very peculiar, a very endearing, and, at the same time, a very lofty character. . . . He tunes his mind to nature almost with a feeling of religious obligation."—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North]:

"He very early became aware of that sympathy with external nature which so strongly marked his writings. . . . He had early learned to watch and note in her [Nature] that to which other eyes were blind."—*R. W. Church*.

"The doctrine of the love of nature is generally regarded as Wordsworth's great lesson to mankind. . . . There is everywhere the sentiment in Wordsworth inspired by his beloved hills. . . . It is not so much the love of nature pure and simple as of nature seen through the deepest human feeling."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Wordsworth's feeling for pastoral nature, and the depths of sentiment which he can deduce from such scenes and the lessons of humanity he can read to the heart of man, are things in themselves for all time."—*R. H. Horne*.

"Among the poets who have helped to cultivate this delight in the observation of natural appearances there is none that deserves to be ranked before Wordsworth."—*David Masson*.

"In the 'Lyrical Ballads' and the 'Excursion,' Mr. Wordsworth appeared as the high-priest of a worship of which nature was the idol. . . . No poems have ever indicated a more exquisite perception of the beauty of the outer world or a more passionate love and reverence for that beauty."—*Macaulay*.

"He shows us, as no other man has done, the beauty, the glory, the holiness of Nature. . . . He spiritualizes for us the outer world."—*Coleridge*.

"He had a human-heartedness about the love he bore to objects. . . . He loved rocks and brooks as one angel might love another—warm human feelings were connected with them."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Wordsworth is as much ravished at the sight of a buttercup at his feet as at the rainbow on the horizon. . . . No poet puts the reader so thoroughly in communion with nature. . . . He is the poet who has most profoundly felt and most powerfully expressed the commerce of the soul with Nature."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"He threw himself not at the feet of Nature but straightway and right tenderly on her bosom."—*Mrs. Browning*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I saw the spring return, and could rejoice,  
In common with the children of her love,  
Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,  
Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven  
On wings that navigate cerulean skies.  
So neither were complacency nor peace  
Nor tender yearnings wanting for my good  
Through these distracted times ; in Nature still  
Glorying, I found a counterpoise in her,  
Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,  
Maintained for me a secret happiness."—*The Prelude*.

"Yes, I remember when the changeful earth  
And twice five summers on my mind had stamped  
The faces of the moving year, even then  
I held unconscious intercourse with beauty  
Old as creation, drinking in a pure  
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths  
Of curling mist, or from the level plain  
Of waters colored by impending clouds.

. . . . .

Even while mine eye hath moved o'er many a league  
 Of shining water, gathering as it seemed  
 Through every hair-breadth in that field of light  
 New pleasure like a bee among the flowers."

—*The Prelude.*

"I wandered lonely as cloud  
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
 When all at once I saw a crowd,  
 A host of golden daffodils ;  
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

"Continuous as the stars that shine  
 And twinkle on the milky way,  
 They stretched in never-ending line  
 Along the margin of a bay :  
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

"The waves beside them danced ; but they  
 Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :  
 A poet could not be but gay  
 In such a jocund company :  
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
 What wealth to me the show had brought."

—*The Daffodils.*

**4. Self-Reflection—Self-Esteem.**—"He early conceived himself to be, and through life was confirmed by circumstances in the faith that he was, a 'dedicated spirit,' a state of mind likely to further an intense but at the same time one-sided development of the intellectual. . . . The same mental necessities of a solitary life . . . had made him also studious of the movements of his own mind and the mutual interaction and dependence of the external and the internal universe. . . . Wordsworth had that self-trust which in the man of genius is sublime and in the man of talent insufferable. . . . He was the historian of Wordsworth-

shire. . . . Study and self-culture did much for him, but they never quite satisfied him that he was capable of making a mistake."—*Lowell*.

"Of the transcendent unlimited there was to this critic [Wordsworth] probably but one specimen known—Wordsworth himself."—*David Masson*.

"None of all the great poets was ever so persuaded of his capacity to understand and his ability to explain how best work was done."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"In Wordsworth we find a personal and a patriotic egoism, a pompousness, a self-importance in dwelling upon details that have value chiefly for the poet."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"Wordsworth's egoism was of an abstract kind, still it was inartistic, a Wordsworthian form of effusiveness."—*Edward Dowden*.

"He had undoubtedly a high opinion of his own powers and performances; and not only this but also a habit of self-study and self-concentration, which kept him talking a good deal about himself."—*W. M. Rossetti*.

"Wordsworth is a moral critic of men rather than a delineator of character. When he takes peddlers and potters for heroes, they are not those of real life, but peddlers and potters after a type in his own imagination. And even then they have but little congruity except that which comes from the didactic unity of their acts and discourses. Ever aiming at man in the simplicity of his nature, all that can be said of his characters is that they are not men but man—man after Wordsworth's own image."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"An intense intellectual egotism swallows up everything. . . . All other interests are absorbed in the deeper interest of his own thoughts, and find the same level."—*William Hazlitt*.

"He is eminently and humanly expansive, . . . spreading his infinite egotism over all the objects of his contemplation."—*Mrs. Browning*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ When, as becomes a man who would prepare  
 For such an arduous work, I through myself  
 Make rigorous inquisition, the report  
 Is often cheering; for I neither seem  
 To lack that first great gift, the vital soul,  
 Nor general truths, which are themselves a sort  
 Of elements and agents—under-powers,  
 Subordinate helpers of the living mind :  
 Nor am I naked of external things,  
 Forms, images, nor numerous other aids  
 Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil,  
 And needful to build up a poet’s praise.”

— *The Prelude.*

“ Still glides the stream, and shall forever glide ;  
 The Form remains, the Function never dies ;  
 While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
 We Men, who in our morn of youth defied  
 The elements, must vanish ;—be it so !  
 Enough, if something from our hands have power  
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour ;  
 And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,  
 Through love, through hope, and faith’s transcendent dower,  
 We feel that we are greater than we know.”—*After-Thought.*

“ My heart leaps up when I behold  
 A rainbow in the sky :  
 So was it when my life began ;  
 So is it now I am a man ;  
 So be it when I shall grow old,  
 Or let me die.  
 The Child is father of the Man ;  
 And I could wish my days to be  
 Bound each to each by natural piety.”

— *The Rainbow.*

**5. Delicate Sense of Sound.**—“ Wordsworth mastered the secret alphabet by which man converses with nature, and

to his soul she spoke an audible language. Indeed, his ear was even more acute than his mind's eye; and no poet has excelled him in the subtle perception of the most remote relations of tone."—*Lowell*.

"Wordsworth is rather a listener than a seer. He hears unearthly tones rather than sees unearthly shapes. The vagueness and indistinctness of the impression which the most beautiful and sublime passages of his works leave upon the mind is similar to that which is conveyed by the most exquisite music. . . . Few have exceeded him in the exquisite delicacy of his sense of sound."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"With him metre is but an additional, accessory grace on that deeper music of words and sounds. . . . Subtle and sharp as he is in the outlining of visible imagery, he is the most subtle and delicate of all in the noting of sounds. . . . This placid life matured in him an unusual innate sensibility to natural sights and sounds. . . . That he awakened a 'sort of thought in sense' is Shelley's just criticism."—*Walter Pater*.

"He has vividly acute senses, and delights in the mere physical use of them. . . . The sense of hearing was the finest, a biographer states."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"The music of some few almost incomparable passages seems to widen and deepen the capacity of the sense for reception of the sublimest harmonies."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"These verses sustain the serious thought by their grave harmony, as a motet accompanies meditation or prayer. They resemble the grand and monotonous music of the organ."—*Taine*.

"Considered as to composition merely, they [Wordsworth's odes] are perfect; the music flows on like a stream, or rolls like a river, or expands like the sea, according as the thought is beautiful or majestic or sublime."—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ The sun has long been set,  
The stars are out by twos and threes,  
The little birds are piping yet  
Among the bushes and the trees ;  
There's a cuckoo and one or two thrushes,  
And a far-off wind that rushes,  
And a sound of water that gushes ;  
And the cuckoo's sovereign cry  
Fills all the hollow of the sky.  
Who would ' go parading '  
In London, and ' masquerading ,'  
On such a night of June  
With that beautiful soft half-moon,  
On all these innocent blisses ?  
On such a night as this is ! ”—*Impromptu*.

“ A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,  
One after one ; the sound of rain and bees  
Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds, and seas,  
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;  
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie  
Sleepless ; and soon the small birds' melodies  
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;  
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.”—*To Sleep*.

“ Behold her, single in the field,  
Yon solitary Highland lass !  
Reaping and singing to herself ;  
Stop here, or gently pass !  
Alone she cuts and binds the grain  
And sings a melancholy strain.  
Oh listen ! for the vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.

“ No nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt  
Among Arabian sands ;

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
 In spring-time from the cuckoo bird,  
 Breaking the silence of the seas  
 Among the farthest Hebrides."

—*The Solitary Reaper.*

✓ **6. Moral Elevation.**—"He is a great Christian moralist and teacher. . . . His gravity and moral aim are Mr. Wordsworth's most prevailing characteristics. . . . Wordsworth is a spiritual singer, a high religious singer, and none the less holy because he stands firmly still to reason among the tossing of the censers."—*R. H. Horne.*

"In many poems we find the poet spiritualizing the familiar appearances and common facts of earth. . . . The Christian view of life and Nature does not at first receive the prominence which is its due. But under the pressure of sorrow he more and more turned to the Christian consolations. . . . He bids his sister . . . to look for no consolation from earthly sources, but to seek it in that purer faith. . . . The sanctifying effect of sorrow on the heroine is, as Wordsworth himself says, the point on which the whole moral interest of the poem ['Margaret'] hinges. . . . The heroine knows that her duty is but 'To abide the shock, and finally secure o'er grief and pain a triumph pure.'"—*J. C. Shairp.*

"He has succeeded in combining his morality with more than ordinary beauty of poetical form. . . . It is by obedience to the stern law-giver, Duty, that flowers gain their fragrance and that the 'inmost ancient heavens' preserve their freshness and strength. . . . Wordsworth's favorite lesson is the possibility of turning grief and disappointment to account. . . . In the 'White Doe of Rylstone' everything succeeds so far as it is moral and spiritual."—*Leslie Stephen.*

"Is it only the matter of the universe which by itself is dead? No, he answered. Matter is animated by a soul, and it is this soul that thrills to meet me. . . . For there are



times when the sense of the spiritual life in Nature becomes so dominant that the material world fades away, and we feel as if we ourselves were pure spirit. . . . What is it, then, to which we speak, with whom we have communion? Not with Nature . . . but with the spirit of the God who abides as Life in all. All this may not be theological, but it is distinctly religious. . . . The religion of Wordsworth is the noblest we possess in our poetry, and the healthiest. . . . It is God, then, who unites Nature to us and directs her teaching, it is his life acting on ours. A wonderful picture—this young and solitary creature living in communion with the Being of the World. . . . And the action of all in Wordsworth's deep religion was to lead him, at last, to reach the point marked out for him by God."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"He is the most spiritual and the most spiritualizing of all English poets."—*H. N. Hudson*.

"It [Wordsworth's poetry] could have arisen from no mind in which moral beauty had not been organized into moral character. . . . As we pause thoughtfully before some of the majestic fabrics of his genius, they seem to wear the look of eternity."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"His works are nothing else than the celebration of the mysteries of this religion."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"Rare peculiarities of character assisted him—his keen spiritual courage and his stern spiritual frugality."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"He reads the poems of Wordsworth without understanding them who does not find in them the noblest incentives to faith in man and in the grandeur of his destiny."—*Lowell*.

"In his eyes, what constitutes our worth is the integrity of our conscience; science itself is only profound when it penetrates moral life."—*Taine*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Milton ! thou shouldst be living at this hour :  
 England hath need of thee : she is a fen  
 Of stagnant waters ; altar, sword, and pen,  
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;  
 Oh, raise us up, return to us again !  
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.”  
 — *To Milton.*

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :  
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
 And cometh from afar :  
 Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God, who is our home :  
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy !  
 Shadows of the prison-house begin to close  
 Upon the growing boy,  
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows ;  
 He sees it in his joy.”—*Ode on Immortality.*

“ Blest statesman he, whose mind's unselfish will  
 Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts : whose eye  
 Sees that, apart from magnanimity,  
 Wisdom exists not ; nor the humbler skill  
 Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill  
 With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,  
 They daunt not him who holds his ministry,  
 Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil  
 Its duties ;—prompt to move, but firm to wait,—  
 Knowing things rashly sought are rarely found.  
 That, for the functions of an ancient State—  
 Strong by her charters, free because imbound,  
 Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate—  
 Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound.”  
 —*Sonnets to Liberty.*

✓ 7. **Heaviness—Dulness.**—"The one element of greatness which 'The Excursion' possesses is indisputably its heaviness. . . . His thought seems often to lean upon a word too weak to bear its weight. . . . Even as a teacher he is often too much of a pedagogue, and is apt to forget that poetry instructs not by precept and inculcation, but by hints and indirections and suggestions."—*Lowell*.

"Who that values his works most has not felt the intrusion there from time to time of something tedious and prosaic?"—*Walter Pater*.

"There is, I should say, not seldom a matter-of-factness in certain of the poems. . . . In this class I comprise occasional prolixity, repetition, and an eddying instead of a progression of thought. . . . It is the awkwardness and strength of Hercules with the distaff of Omphale."—*Coleridge*.

"Whatever there may be of interest or pathos in the record of Margaret's troubles, is fairly swamped in a watery world of words as monotonous and colorless as drizzling mist."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"It is easy to find them [his works] oppressive and to complain of him as heavy and wearisome."—*R. W. Church*.

"There are times when this moralizing tendency leads him to the regions of the namby-pamby or sheer prosaic platitude."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"When he seeks to have a style he falls into ponderosity and pomposity."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"Wordsworth, the prolific and discursive poet, . . . expands himself in slow and boundless strides. . . . They [his poems] are a little heavy, a little monotonous, and it is hard to read them without ennui."—*Edmond Scherer*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"And now, at last,  
From perils manifold, with some small wealth  
Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian isles,

To his paternal home he is returned,  
 With a determined purpose to resume.  
 The life he had lived there."—*The Brothers*.

"The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,  
 Forbade her all communion with her own :  
 Week after week the mandate they enforced,  
 —So near ! yet not allowed, upon that sight  
 To fix her eyes—alas ! 'twas hard to bear !  
 But worse affliction must be borne—far worse ;  
 For 'tis Heaven's will that, after a disease  
 Begun and ended within three days' space,  
 Her child should die ; as Ellen now exclaimed,  
 Her own—deserted child !—Once, only once,  
 She saw it in that mortal malady ;  
 And, on the burial day, could scarcely gain  
 Permission to attend its obsequies."—*The Excursion*.

"The alarm  
 Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I came,  
 And by what help had gained those distant fields.  
 Drawn from her cottage, on that æry height,  
 Bearing a lantern in her hand, she stood,  
 Or paced the ground—to guide her husband home,  
 By that unweary signal kenned afar ;  
 An anxious duty ! which the lofty site,  
 Traversed but by a few irregular paths,  
 Imposes, whensoever untoward chance  
 Detains him after his accustomed hour."—*The Excursion*.

**8. Imaginative Power.**—"Lastly and pre-eminently I challenge for this poet the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word. . . . Without his depth of feeling and his imaginative power, his sense would want its vital warmth. . . . In imaginative power he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton."  
 —*Coleridge*.

"The imaginative faculty is that with which Wordsworth is

most eminently gifted. . . . The imagination of Wordsworth has given to the external universe a charm which has never [before] been shed over it."—*T. N. Talfourd*.

"The reader will notice that, although the style becomes almost transfigured by the intense and brooding imagination, the diction is still as simple as prose. . . . It is instinct with the most refined and subtle imagination. . . . To him belongs the praise of giving its distinctive character to the imaginative literature of his age. . . . It is evident that the fineness of his imagination requires thought and attention to be appreciated. . . . 'Peter Bell' and 'The Excursion' are works replete with elevation of thought and grandeur of imagination."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"His imagination lends life and feeling to the bare trees, peoples the tracts of air. . . . No one has shown the same imagination in raising trifles into importance."—*William Hazlitt*.

"None but Wordsworth has ever so completely transmuted by an imaginative spirit unsatisfied yearnings into eternal truths."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"His imagination was a treasure-house whence he drew forth things new and old, the old as fresh as the new."—*J. C. Shairp*.

"He hates science because it regards facts without the imaginative coloring."—*Leslie Stephen*.

"Every page of his poetry abounds with instances of imagination."—*David Masson*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"A few are near him still—and now the sky,  
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.  
O most ambitious Star! an inquest wrought  
Within me when I recognized thy light;  
A moment I was startled at the sight:  
And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought

That I might step beyond my natural race  
 As thou seem'st now to do ; might one day trace  
 Some ground not mine ; and, strong her strength above,  
 My Soul, an apparition in the place,  
 Tread there with steps which no one shall reprove."

—*Lines on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.*

" O Nightingale ! thou surely art  
 A creature of a ' fiery heart : '—  
 These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce ;  
 Tumultuous harmony and fierce !  
 Thou sing'st as if the God of wine  
 Had helped thee to a valentine ;  
 A song in mockery and despite  
 Of shades and dews and silent night  
 And steady bliss and all the loves  
 Now sleeping in these peaceful groves."

—*The Simpton Pass.*

" Then up I rose,  
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash  
 And merciless ravage : and the shady nook  
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up  
 Their quiet being : and, unless I now  
 Confound my present feelings with the past,  
 Ere from the mutilated bower I turned  
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,  
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
 The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—  
 Then, dearest maiden, move along these shades  
 In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand  
 Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods."—*Nutting.*

**9. Sympathy with Humanity.** " As the poet of suffering and of sympathy with suffering, his station is unequalled in its kind. . . . Wordsworth at his best is sublime by the very force of his tenderness. . . . May his immortal words of sympathy find immortal application to himself."  
 —*A. C. Swinburne.*

"The chief characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry consists in the profound insight, wide sympathy, and vital force with which it presents us to the human nature. . . . Wordsworth's poems are profound illustrations of the 'Humanities.' It is the broad rough life of man that confronts us, not the life of the sentimentalist."—*Aubrey De Vere*.

"It was here [at Hawkshead in Lancashire] that Wordsworth learned that homely humanity which gives such depth and sincerity to his poems. . . . Nothing could obliterate the deep trace of that early training which enables him to speak directly to the primitive instincts of man. . . . He has won for himself a secure immortality . . . by a homely sincerity of human sympathy which reaches the humblest heart."—*Lowell*.

"It was in this free pastoral life that the roots of Wordsworth's love for man struck deep. . . . He was able . . . to grasp the higher view of manhood and to love mankind. . . . He had compassion on the immoral. He saw in the idiots those whose life was hidden in God. . . . In wrath and pity he threw himself into the cause of distressed nationality. . . . This was his work, to make unworldly men listen to the beating of the heart of natural humanity. . . . He wrote with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes may feel deeply."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"His poetry meets the want of actual life—consolation, help, sympathy. . . . In this intense spiritualism, mingled with the mildest and sweetest humanity, we see the . . . power of Wordsworth. . . . They [his poems] will exert a vast influence upon society through the diffusion of just and beautiful sentiments of benevolence and charity. . . . Mercy, justice, wisdom, piety, love, freedom, in their full beauty and grandeur are the subjects of his song; and we have yet to learn that these can subsist with the slightest injury done to a human being."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"The lower a being is in the scale, the more he labors to awaken our sympathy in its favor. . . . The experience of life opens the heart to a kind of affection for all created things."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"To console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, this was his purpose."—*R. W. Church*.

"Wordsworth is a feeling man ; . . . he knows grief by sympathy rather than by suffering."—*Mrs. Browning*.

"One will be struck with the author's knowledge of the human heart and the power he possesses of stirring up its deepest and gentlest sympathies."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"He sees nothing loftier than human hopes, nothing deeper than the human heart."—*William Hazlitt*.

"It is the superior depth of genuine sincerity and truth in Wordsworth's humanity that renders his poems indestructible."—*John Addington Symonds*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Unoccupied by sorrow of its own, x  
His heart lay open ; and by Nature tuned  
And constant disposition of his thoughts  
To sympathy with man, he was alive  
To all that was enjoyed, where'er he went,  
And all that was endured ; for in himself  
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,  
He had no painful pressure from without  
That made him turn about from wretchedness  
With coward fears. He could afford to suffer  
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came  
That in our best experience he was rich  
And in the wisdom of our daily life."—*The Excursion*.

"Heart-pleased we smile upon the bird  
If seen, and with like pleasure stirred  
Commend him, when he's only heard.



But small and fugitive our gain  
 Compared with hers who long hath lain,  
 With languid limbs and patient head,  
 Reposing on a lone sick bed ;  
 Where now she daily hears a strain  
 That cheats her of too busy cares,  
 Eases her pain, and helps her prayers ;  
 And who but this dear bird beguiled  
 The fever of that pale-faced child ;  
 Now cooling, with his passing wing,  
 Her forehead, like a breeze of spring :  
 Recalling now, with descant soft,  
 Shed round her pillow from aloft,  
 Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh  
 And the invisible sympathy  
 Of ' Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John,  
 Blessing the bed she lies upon ? '—*The Redbreast.*

" Glad sight wherever new with old  
 Is joined through some dear home-born tie ;  
 The life of all that we behold  
 Depends upon that mystery.  
 Vain is the glory of the sky,  
 The beauty vain of field and grove,  
 Unless, while with admiring eye  
 We gaze, we also learn to love."—*To a Lady.*

**10. Early Puerility—Exaggeration of the Trivial.**—This characteristic is one for which Wordsworth has been severely and sometimes justly criticised.

" Wordsworth's true simplicity, the simplicity which came from writing close to the truth of things and making the word rise out of the idea conceived, cannot be too highly commended ; but in respect to his false simplicity for the sake of being simple, we can only say that it has given some point to the sarcasm, ' that Chaucer writes like a child but Wordsworth writes childishly.' . . . The occasional puerilities of expression in his early poems are not sufficient to break the charm they exert on susceptible minds."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Work altogether inferior, work quite uninspired, flat, and dull, is produced by him with evident unconsciousness of its depths, and he presents it to us with the same faith and assurance as his best work."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"His taste for simplicity is evinced by sprinkling up and down his interminable declamations a few descriptions of baby-houses and of old hats and wet brims."—*Francis Jeffrey*.

"Half of his pieces are childish, almost foolish. . . . All the poets in the world could not reconcile us to so much tedium. . . . This sentimental prettiness quickly grows insipid, and the style by its factitious simplicity renders it still more insipid."—*Taine*.

"His simplicity is not infrequently childish ; his calmness, stagnation ; his pathos, puerility."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" And he is lean and he is sick :  
     His body, dwindled and awry,  
 Rests upon ankles swollen and thick ;  
     His legs are thin and dry ;  
 . . . . .  
 " Few months of life he has in store,  
     As he to you will tell,  
 For still, the more he works, the more  
     Do his weak ankles swell."—*Simon Lee*.

" There's George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald Shore,  
 Three rosy-cheeked school-boys, the highest not more  
 Than the height of a counsellor's bag ;  
 To the top of Great How did it please them to climb,  
 And there they built up, without mortar or lime,  
 A man on the peak of the crag.

" They built him of stones gathered up as they lay :  
 Thy built him and christened him all in one day,  
 An urchin both vigorous and hale ;  
 And so without scruple they called him Ralph Jones."  
     —*Rural Architecture*.

"All, all is silent—rocks and woods  
 All still and silent—far and near !  
 Only the ass, with motion dull,  
 Upon the pivot of his skull  
 Turns round his long left ear.

. . . . .

Upon the beast the sapling rings ;  
 His lank sides heaved, his limbs they stirred ;  
 He gave a groan, and then another,  
 Of that which went before the brother,  
 And then he gave a third."—*Peter Bell*.

**II. Freshness — Originality.** — "Wordsworth is the most original poet now [1830] living. . . . His poetry is not external but internal ; it does not depend upon tradition or story or old song ; he furnishes it from his own mind and is his own subject."—*William Hazlitt*.

"The choice of his characters from humble and rustic life was caused partly from the original make of his nature. . . . He was the first who both in theory and in practice shook off the trammels of the so-called poetic diction which had tyrannized over English poetry for more than a century. . . . What contemporary poet has left to his country such a gallery of new and individual portraits as a permanent possession?"—*J. C. Shairp*.

"There is no poet who gives to his poems so perfectly a new birth as Wordsworth. . . . In his poems there will ever be a spring of something even fresher than poetic life—a pure, deep well of solitary joy."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"How pure and fresh his poetry is ! how healthy and natural, but how true to Nature and how near to God !" —*Stopford Brooke*.

"No frequency of perusal can deprive his poems of their freshness. 'The River Duddon' is singularly pure in style and fresh in conception. . . . This atmosphere is sometimes sparklingly clear, as if the air and dew and sunshine of a

May morning had found a home in his imagination."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Nature herself seems, I say, to take the pen out of his hand and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. . . . He can and will treat a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere naturalness."—*Matthew Arnold*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Up with me ! up with me, into the clouds :  
For thy song, Lark, is strong ;  
Up with me, up with me, into the clouds !  
Singing, singing,  
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,  
Lift me, guide me, till I find  
That spot that seems so to thy mind."

—*To a Sky-Lark*.

"O blithe new-comer ! I have heard,  
I hear thee and rejoice.  
O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee bird,  
Or but a wandering voice ?

"While I am lying on the grass  
Thy twofold shout I hear ;  
From hill to hill it seems to pass,  
At once far off and near.

"Though bubbling only to the vale,  
Of sunshine and of flowers,  
Thou bringest unto me a tale  
Of visionary hours.

"Thrice welcome, darling of the spring !  
Even yet thou art to me  
No bird, but an invisible thing,  
A voice, a mystery."—*To the Cuckoo*.

"Beneath these fruit-tree boughs that shed  
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,  
With brightest sunshine round me spread

Of spring's unclouded weather,  
 In this sequestered nook how sweet  
 To sit upon my orchard seat !  
 And birds and flowers once more to greet,  
 My last year's friends together."

—*The Green Linnet.*

**12. Pathos.**—"To many 'The Excursion' will always be dear for the pictures of mountain scenes and the pathetic records of rural life which it contains. . . . For feelings, not on the surface but in the depth, pathos pure and profound, what of modern verse can equal this story ['The Excursion'] and that of Margaret?"—*J. C. Shairp.*

"The most especial and distinctive quality of his genius is rather its pathetic than its meditative note."—*A. C. Swinburne.*

"He sees images in his own words of man suffering amid awful forms and powers. . . . He is the true forerunner of the deepest and most passionate poetry of our own day."—*Walter Pater.*

"Nothing can exceed the pathos with which Wordsworth can tell these simple local stories."—*David Masson.*

"To me the pathos of Wordsworth is like the sweetness of Michael Angelo. As the sweetness of Michael Angelo is sweeter than that of other men because of his strength, so the pathos of Wordsworth is the more moving because of the calmness and reserve with which it is clothed. . . . In mild and philosophic pathos Wordsworth seems to me without a compeer."—*Coleridge.*

"The still, searching pathos of 'We Are Seven' . . . indicates a vision into the deepest sources of emotion."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"No one has displayed the same pathos in treating of the simplest feelings of the heart."—*William Hazlitt.*

"In 'We Are Seven,' indeed, the pathos overcomes the

quaint familiarity of style, and embodies the touching sentiment with irresistible effect. . . . He showed with Burns how far deep down the pathetic and the tender go in life."—*R. W. Church.*

"We often meet in his works little passages in which we seem almost to contemplate the well-spring of pure emotion and gentle pathos. . . . No [other] poet has done such justice to the depth and fulness of maternal love."—*T. N. Talfourd.*

"In this poem ["Margaret"] there is a profound pathos swelling in volume to the end. . . . Pathos is a characteristic of nearly all of Wordsworth's poems, but the tears which it brings to the eyes are often those of gladness mingled with regret."—*Aubrey De Vere.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Thus they were calmed  
And cheered ; and now together breathe fresh air  
In open fields ; and when the glare of day  
Is gone, and twilight to the mother's wish  
Befriends the observance, readily they join  
In walks whose boundary is the lost one's grave,  
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there  
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss  
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf  
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite  
Of pious faith the vanities of grief ;  
For such, by pitying angels and by spirits  
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds  
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed  
Those willing tears and unforbidden sighs,  
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,  
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven  
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart  
Immortal as the love that gave it being."

—*Maternal Grief.*

“ Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,  
 And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;  
 They mount—how short a voyage brings  
 The wanderers back to their delight !  
 Chains tie us down by land and sea ;  
 And wishes, vain as mine, may be  
 All that is left to comfort thee.

“ Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,  
 Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;  
 Or thou upon a desert thrown  
 Inheritest the lion’s den ;  
 Or hast been summoned to the deep,  
 Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep  
 An incommunicable sleep.

“ Beyond participation lie  
 My troubles, and beyond relief :  
 If any chance to heave a sigh,  
 They pity me and not my grief.  
 Then come to me, my Son, or send  
 Some tidings, that my woes may end :  
 I have no other earthly friend.”

—*The Affliction of Margaret.*

“ Unblest distinction ! showered on me  
 To bind a lingering life in chains :  
 All that could quit my grasp, or flee,  
 Is gone ;—but not the subtle stains  
 Fixed in the spirit ; for even here  
 Can I be proud that jealous fear  
 Of what I was remains.

“ A woman rules my prison’s key ;  
 A sister Queen, against the bent  
 Of law and holiest sympathy,  
 Detains me, doubtful of the event ;  
 Great God, who feel’st for my distress,  
 My thoughts are all that I possess ;  
 Oh keep them innocent ! ”

—*Lament of Mary Queen of Scots.*

**13. Didacticism.**—"To teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and to feel . . . this is his own account of the purpose of his poetry. . . . 'Every great poet,' he said, 'is a teacher; I wish either to be considered as a teacher or as nothing.'"—*R. W. Church*.

"In what high vein can he write in whom the spirit of prophecy is replaced by the spirit of mere teaching? . . . He wrote to impress the world with a sense of their [the poor] dignity in suffering and the moral grandeur of their honest poverty."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"His habit of seeking and finding lessons in the smallest incidents of his walks passes into a didactic mania."—*Edmond Scherer*.

"Every little lyric . . . is organically connected with the long narrative and didactic poems."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He saw a grandeur, a beauty, a teaching in trivial events. . . . In short, the poem ["The Excursion"] is as grave and dull as a sermon."—*Taine*.

"He does actually convey to the reader an extraordinary wisdom in the things of practice."—*Walter Pater*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"There are in our existence spots of time,  
That with distinct pre-eminence retain  
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed  
By false opinion and contentious thought,  
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,  
In trivial occupations, and the round  
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds  
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;  
A virtue by which pleasure is enhanced,  
That penetrates, enables us to mount,  
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen."

—*The Prelude*.



" A piteous lot were it to flee from man—  
 Yet not rejoice in nature. He whose hours  
 Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed  
 And unenlivened; who exists whole years  
 Apart from benefits received or done  
 'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd;  
 Who neither hears nor feels a wish to hear  
 Of the world's interests—such a one hath need  
 Of a quick fancy and an active heart,  
 That, for the day's consumption, books may yield  
 Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct  
 His morbid humor, with delight supplied  
 Or solace, varying as the seasons change."

—*The Excursion.*

" Fit retribution, by the moral code  
 Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace;  
 Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case  
 She plants well-measured terrors in the road  
 Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and broad,  
 And, the main fear once doomed to banishment,  
 Far oftener then, bad ushering worse event,  
 Blood would be spilt that in his dark abode  
 Crime might lie better hid. And, should the change  
 Take from the horror due to a foul deed,  
 Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,  
 And, guilt escaping, passion then might plead  
 In angry spirits for her old free range,  
 And the 'wild justice of revenge' prevail."

—*Sonnets upon the Punishment of Death.*

**14. Grandeur—Stateliness—Serenity.**—" Wordsworth walks, . . . though he limps at times, with almost as stately a step as Milton. . . . I cannot but think that the element of grandeur of style . . . flowed largely from the solemn simplicity. . . . The power which in Nature . . . made her hours of calm, produced calm in him, and a certain love of calm in himself strengthened the impression. . . . He felt the loveliness and calm in the

world as similar to moral loveliness and calm, and as age grew on, his calmness deepened."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"In 'The Excursion' we forget the poverty of the getting up to admire the purity and elevation of the thought. . . . This book is like a Protestant temple, august, though bare and monotonous. . . . They [his stanzas] resemble the grand monotonous music of the organ."—*Taine*.

"A dream which reaches the *ne plus ultra* of sublimity . . . expressly framed to illustrate the eternity. . . . No describer so powerful or idealizing so magnificently what he deals with, has been a spectator of parallel scenes."—*De Quincey*.

"He clothes the naked with beauty and grandeur. . . . His mind seemed embued with the majesty and solemnity of the objects around him."—*William Hazlitt*.

"His diction never in his best works is deficient in splendor and compass. . . . In this faculty of awakening sentiments of grandeur, sublimity, beauty, affection, devotion, . . . it would be difficult to find a parallel to Wordsworth. . . . He is above the tempests and turbulence of life, and moves in regions where serenity is strength."—*E. P. Whipple*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Serene will be our days and bright,  
And happy will our nature be,  
When love is an unerring light,  
And joy its own security.  
And they a blissful course may hold  
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,  
Live in the spirit of this creed;  
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need."  
—*Ode to Duty*.

"Child of the clouds! remote from every taint  
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast;  
Thine are the honors of the lofty waste;  
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,

Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissues quaint  
Thy cradle decks ;—to chant thy birth, thou hast  
No meaner poet than the whistling Blast,  
And Desolation is thy Patron-saint ! ”

—*The River Duddon.*

“ Child of loud-throated War ! the mountain stream  
Roars in thy hearing ; but thy hour of rest  
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age ;  
Save when the wind sweeps by and sounds are caught  
Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.  
Oh ! there is life that breathes not ; powers there are  
That touch each other to the quick in modes  
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,  
No soul to dream of.”—*Address to Kilchurn Castle.*

## EMERSON, 1803-1882

**Biographical Outline.**—Ralph Waldo Emerson, born in Boston, Mass., May 25, 1803, the second of five sons; father pastor of the "First Church" (Congregational) of Boston; Emerson enters the public grammar school in 1811 and the Boston Latin School soon afterward; at the age of eleven (1814) he is translating Virgil into English verse; he is fond, also, of Greek, history, and poetry; he composes verses, and thinks highly of "the idle books under the bench at the Latin School;" he enters Harvard College in 1818, and is graduated in 1821; he receives second prize for English composition in his Senior year, but gives little evidence of remarkable ability while in college; he joins his brother William in conducting a private school at Boston, and later serves as principal of an "Academy" at Chelmsford, now a part of Lowell; later he has a private school at Cambridge.

In 1823 he begins studying for the ministry under Dr. Channing, afterward taking a course of lectures at the Harvard Divinity School; owing to trouble with his eyes, he takes no notes at the Divinity School, and is excused from the examinations; Emerson wrote later, "If they had examined me, they probably would not have let me preach at all;" in 1826 he is "approved to preach" by the Middlesex Association of Ministers; he visits South Carolina and Florida during the winter of 1827-28, and preaches several times at Charleston and other places; returning, he preaches temporarily in several New England towns; in March, 1829, he is ordained colleague of Dr. Ware in the "Second Church" of Boston; in September, 1829, he marries Ellen Louisa Tucker, who dies of consumption in February, 1832; in

September, 1832, he preaches his famous sermon on the Lord's Supper, expressing his scruples against administering the same and announcing his intention, therefore, to resign his office.

He visits Europe in 1833, making a tour of Sicily, Italy, France, and England, and meeting Coleridge, Wordsworth, Landor, De Quincey, and Carlyle; he becomes a resident of Concord in the summer of 1834, first occupying the "Old Manse" of Hawthorne's novel; he begins lecturing in the winter of 1833-34, giving three lectures treating of his European experiences and two, respectively, on "Water" and "The Relation of Man to the Globe;" during 1834 he lectures on Michael Angelo, Milton, Luther, George Fox, and Burke; the first two of these lectures were published in the *North American Review* for 1837-38; Emerson begins, in May, 1834, his correspondence with Carlyle, which lasts till 1872; in September, 1835, he marries Lydia Jackson, of Plymouth, Mass.; during 1835 he gives ten lectures in Boston on "English Literature;" in 1836, twelve lectures on "The Philosophy of History;" in 1837, ten lectures on "Human Culture;" in April, 1836, he writes his great "Commemoration Ode;" till 1838 he preaches frequently as a "supply" at East Lexington, Mass.; he lectures on "War" in 1837, and publishes anonymously in 1836 his small book entitled "Nature," which Holmes calls "a reflective prose poem;" in August, 1837, he delivers his Phi Beta Kappa oration at Cambridge, entitled "The American Scholar;" on July 15, 1838, he delivers at Cambridge his Divinity School Address, which excites severe criticism by theologians and raises Emerson "to the importance of a heretic;" in 1838-39 he gives ten lectures on "Human Life," of which these titles—"Love," "Demonology," and "The Comic"—remain in his published works; he contributes, during 1838 and 1839, the poems entitled "The Humble Bee" and "To the Rhodora" to the *Western Messenger* (both

poems written about 1823); in July, 1838, he lectures on "Literary Ethics" at Dartmouth College; in December, 1838, Emerson writes to Carlyle that he has \$22,000 drawing six per cent. interest, besides his house, his two-acre lot, and an income of \$800 from his lectures; in August, 1841, he lectures at Waterville, Me., on "The Method of Nature;" writing to Carlyle about this time, Emerson calls himself "an incorrigible spouting Yankee."

From 1840 to 1844 he contributes more than thirty articles, including some of his best poems, to the *Dial*, first edited by Margaret Fuller, and later (1842-44) by Emerson himself; during 1841 he delivers, also, his lectures on "Man the Reformer," "The Times," "The Transcendentalist," and "The Conservative;" he publishes, during 1841, his first volume of collected essays, including those on History, Self-Reliance, Compensation, Spiritual Laws, Love, Friendship, Prudence, Heroism, the Over-Soul, Circles, and Art; in February, 1842, he loses his only son, then five years old, whom he mourns to Carlyle as "a piece of love and sunshine well worth my watching from morning to night," and writes "A Threnody" in memory of his lost child; he delivers his address on "The Young American" in February, 1844, and publishes, during the same year, the second volume of his essays; he lectures also on "New England Reformers" during 1844, and publishes the first volume of his poems in 1846; he sails a second time for Europe October 5, 1847; after spending a week with Carlyle, Emerson begins a lecture tour, arranged for him by the Rev. Alexander Ireland; while lecturing in Edinburgh he meets Leigh Hunt, De Quincey, and many other notabilities; he visits Paris before returning to America; in 1850 he publishes selections from his English lectures under the title "Representative Men;" during 1855 he delivers anti-slavery addresses in New York and Boston, favoring the purchase of the slaves by the Government, and also supports female suffrage in an address before the Woman's

Rights Convention ; in 1856 he publishes "English Traits ;" in 1857 he begins to contribute to the *Atlantic Monthly*, then just established, and continues till his twenty-eighth article ; he helps to found the famous "Saturday Club," which includes Hawthorne, Motley, Dana, Lowell, Whipple, Agassiz, Holmes, Longfellow, and others ; during 1858 he publishes his essay on Persian Poetry.

In 1859 Emerson makes his greatest public speech—at the Burns Festival in Boston ; in 1860 he publishes the "Conduct of Life ;" in 1862 he delivers his funeral address over Thoreau and his Address on the Emancipation Proclamation ; during 1863 he publishes "The Boston Hymn," "Voluntaries," and many other poems ; during 1866 he writes "Terminus," one of his noblest poems ; during 1868, 1869, and 1870 he lectures at Harvard University on "The Natural History of the Intellect ;" in 1870 he publishes "Society and Solitude ;" during 1871 he visits California in company with Professor J. B. Thayer, who afterward published an account of the journey ; Emerson loses a part of his house and many valuable papers by fire in July, 1872 ; he sails the third time for Europe in October, 1872, in company with his daughter Ellen, going as far as Egypt ; during his absence friends subscribe \$11,620 for the rebuilding of his house ; he returns to Concord in May, 1873, and is greeted with a popular ovation ; in 1874 he publishes "Parnassus," a collection of poems from British and American authors ; during the same year he is nominated Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, and receives five hundred votes against seven hundred for Disraeli, which he calls "quite the fairest laurel that has ever fallen on me ;" in April, 1875, he delivers an address at Concord on the one hundredth anniversary of "the fight at the bridge ;" before the shock of the fire in 1872 his mental powers, especially his memory, began to show signs of failure ; in March, 1878, he lectures in the Old South Church at Boston on "Fortune of the Republic ;" in May, 1879, he

lectures at Harvard University on "The Preacher;" in 1881 he reads before the Massachusetts Historical Society a paper on Carlyle; in February, 1882, he publishes in the *Century* an article on "Superlatives;" he dies at Concord, April 27, 1882.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

### I. Optimism — Serenity — Wholesomeness.—

“Emerson's sympathetic benevolence comes from what he calls his ‘persistent optimism.’ . . . Never had man such a sense of the inexhaustibleness of nature and such hope. Happiness in labor—rightness and veracity in all the life of the spirit, happiness and eternal hope—that was Emerson's gospel. . . . His persistent optimism is the root of his greatness and the source of his charm. . . . Strong as was Emerson's optimism, and unconquerable as was his belief in a good result to emerge from all which he saw going on around him, no misanthropical satirist ever saw shortcomings and absurdities more clearly than he did, or exposed them more courageously. . . . Truly, his insight is admirable, his truth is precious; yet the secret of his effect is not even in these; it is in his temper. It is in the hopeful, serene, beautiful temper wherewith these, in Emerson, are indissolubly joined; in which they work, and have their being.”—*Matthew Arnold*.

“Emerson looked serenely at the ugly aspect of contemporary life because, as an optimist, he was a herald of the future. . . . Carlyle, as a pessimist, denounced the pres-

ent, and threw all the energy of his vivid dramatic genius into vitalizing the past. He [Emerson] declared, even when current events appeared ugliest to the philanthropist, that 'the highest thought and the deepest love is born with Victory at its head.' "—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He was an optimist with reverent intent. It was in vain to ask him to assert what he did not know, to avow a creed founded upon his hopes. . . . He looked upon nature as pregnant with soul; for him the spirit always moved upon the face of the waters. The incomprehensible plan was perfect. Whatever is, is right."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"He had faith that the goodness and wisdom of humanity would, in the long run, prove to be more than equal to the goodness and wisdom of any possible man; and that men would govern themselves more nobly and successfully than any individual monarch could govern them. . . . He is the champion of the Republic; he is our future living in our present and showing the world, by anticipation, what sort of excellence we are capable of."—*Julian Hawthorne*.

"'Tis everything to have a true believer in the world, dealing with men and women as if they were divine in idea and real in fact; meeting persons and events at a glance directly, not at a million removes, and so passing fair and fresh into life and literature the delights and ornaments of the race."—*A. B. Alcott*.

"He was an optimist, always full of hope, finding sky-born music in everything and a power in nature to lift better up to best."—*George Bancroft*.

"The greatness of his work consists in the measure of pure genius and of inspiration to noble and heroic conduct which it holds. As a writer he had but one aim, namely, to inspire, to wake up his reader or hearer to the noblest and the highest that there was in him. . . . He was to scatter the seed-germs of nobler thinking and living. . . . In Emerson more than in any other there are words that are like

banners leading to victory, symbolical, inspiring, rallying, seconding, and pointing the way to our best endeavor. . . . His mind acts like a sun lens in gathering the cold pale beams of that luminary to a focus which warms and stimulates the reader in a surprising manner."—*John Burroughs*.

"In all he is the optimist rather than the pessimist, the philosopher, not the mere by-stander. . . . He wrote to Carlyle, 'My whole philosophy, which is very real, teaches acquiescence and optimism.' He was an optimist, a serene presence, unexcited because confident of the ultimate result. Though bitterly attacked, he seldom retorted and seldom swerved from his self-confident course."—*C. F. Richardson*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Hast not thy share? On winged feet,  
Lo! it rushes thee to meet;  
And all that Nature made thy own,  
Floating in air or pent in stone,  
Will rive the hills and swim the sea,  
And, like thy shadow, follow thee."

—*Compensation*.

"Yet spake yon purple mountain,  
Yet said yon ancient wood,  
That Night or Day, that Love or Crime,  
Leads all souls to the good."—*The Park*.

"How much, preventing God, how much I owe  
To the defences thou hast round me set;  
Example, custom, fear, occasion slow,—  
These scorned bondsmen were my parapet."—*Grace*.

✓ **2. Moral Elevation.**—"That he speaks always to what is highest and what is least selfish in us, few Americans of the generation younger than his own would be disposed to deny."  
—*Lowell*.

"He lives in the highest atmosphere of thought. . . . He is always in the presence of the infinite, and ennobles the

accidents of human existence so that they partake of the absolute and eternal while he is looking at them."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"He is moral first and last, and it is through his impassioned and poetic treatment of the moral law that he gains such an ascendancy over his reader. . . . When he died, it was not as a sweet singer, like Longfellow, who had gone silent; but something precious and paternal had gone out of nature; a voice of courage and hope and inspiration to all noble endeavor had ceased to speak. . . . He says, as for other things he makes poetry of them, but the moral law makes poetry of him."—*John Burroughs*.

"He has been a delighted student of many literatures and many religions, but all his quotations from them show that he rejects everything which does not tend to cheer, invigorate, and elevate, which is not nutritious food for the healthy human soul. . . . He drew from all sources, and whatever fed his religious sense of mystery, of might, of beauty, and of Deity was ever welcome to his soul."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"His poetry comes from a large and pure nature, and it will always be prized most by the readers who are most in sympathy with the qualities which gain for the author the respect and the gratitude of those whose respect and gratitude are best worth having."—*Charles Eliot Norton*.

"He taught in the first place that this universe is a spiritual universe, a manifestation of God. . . . In one of his poems, entitled 'Blight,' he laments the shallow cowardice of the age that contents itself with mere hearsay, and so misses the divine vision and the divine life."—*W. H. Savage*.

"When Emerson wishes to speak with peculiar terseness, with unusual exaltation, with special depth of meaning, with the utmost intensity of feeling, he speaks in poetic form."—*C. F. Richardson*.

"With Emerson it is always the special capacity for moral experience—always that and only that. We have the impres-

sion somehow that life had never bribed him to look at anything but the soul."—*Henry James*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Life is too short to waste  
In critic peep or cynic bark,  
Quarrel or reprimand ;  
'Twill soon be dark ;  
Up! mind thine own aim and  
God save the mark !"—*To J. W.*

" Though love repine and reason chafe,  
There came a voice without reply,  
' 'Tis man's perdition to be safe,  
When for the truth he ought to die.'"  
—*Sacrifice*.

" So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,  
When duty whispers low, ' Thou must,'  
The youth replies, ' I can.'"—*Voluntaries*.

✓ **3. Individuality—Sincerity.**—" Like all poets and philosophers who are classed as pantheists, Emerson had a pronounced individuality. Throughout his life he guarded it with a jealous care. He could never endure the thought of being the organ of any. . . . In reading him we feel that we are in communion with an original person as well as with an original poet. . . . Nothing that can be said against him touches his essential quality of manliness. . . . How superb and animating his lofty intellectual courage! ' The soul,' he says, ' is in her native realm, and it is wider than space, older than time, wide as hope, rich as love.' The poet's character was on a level with his lofty thinking."—*E. P. Whipple*.

" Emerson's ideal is the man who stands firm, who is unmoved, who never laughs or apologizes or assents through good-nature or goes abroad ; who is not afraid of giving of-

fence ; who never answers you with supplication in his eye—in fact, who stands like a granite pillar amid the slough of life. . . . He leads, in our time and country, one illustrious division, at least, in the holy crusade of the affections and intuitions against the usurpations of tradition and theological dogma.”—*John Burroughs*.

“ By this individualism was founded the great nation in which Emerson so thoroughly believed, and upon it must that nation rest in the future. . . . Both in poetry and in prose his influence is as spontaneous as that of nature ; he announces and lets others plead.”—*C. F. Richardson*.

“ He represents Thought in any adjustment of our poetic group, and furthermore—his thought being independent and emancipatory—the American conflict with superstition, with servility to inherited usage and opinion. . . . He has taught his countrymen the worth of virtue, wisdom, and courage, above all, to fashion life upon a self-reliant plan, obeying the dictates of their own souls. . . . Emerson never felt the strength of proportion that compels the races to whom art is a religion and a law. . . . His instinct of personality, not without a pride of its own, made him a nonconformist.”—*E. C. Stedman*.

“ Instead of cultivating the tormenting and enfeebling spirit of scruple, instead of multiplying precepts, he bade men not to crush out their souls under the burden of Duty ; they are to remember that a wise life is not wholly filled up by commandments to do and to abstain from doing. Hence we have in Emerson the teaching of a vigorous morality without the formality of a dogma and the deadly tedium of didactics.”—*John Morley*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Seek not the spirit, if it hide  
Inexorable to thy zeal :  
Trembler, do not whine and chide :  
Art thou not also real ?

Stoop not then to poor excuse ;  
 Turn on the accuser roundly ; say,  
 ' Here am I, here will I abide  
 Forever to myself soothfast ;  
 Go thou, sweet Heaven, or at thy pleasure stay !'  
 Already Heaven with thee its lot has cast,  
 For only it can absolutely deal."—*Sursum Corda.*

" I like a church, I like a cowl ;  
 I love a prophet of the soul ;  
 And on my heart monastic aisles  
 Fall like sweet strains or pensive smiles ;  
 Yet not for all his faith can see  
 Would I that cowlèd Churchman be."

—*The Problem.*

" Man's the elm, and Wealth the vine ;  
 Stanch and strong the tendrils twine :  
 Though the frail ringlets thee deceive,  
 None from its stock that vine can reave.  
 Fear not, then, thou child infirm,  
 There's no god dare wrong a worm ;  
 Laurel crowns cleave to deserts,  
 And Power to him who power exerts."

—*Compensation.*

✓ **4. Conciseness — Condensation.** — " So many precious sayings enrich his more sustained poems as to make us include him at times with the complete artists. . . . Bacon's elementary essays excepted, there are none in English of which it can be more truly averred that there is nothing superfluous in them. . . . Each sentence is an idea, an epigram, an image, or a flash of spiritual light. . . . Terseness is a distinctive feature of his style. . . . No one has compressed more sternly the pith of his discourse. . . . His generalizations pertain to the unseen world ; viewing the actual, he puts its strength and fineness alike into a line or an epithet. He was born with an unrivalled faculty of selection. . . . Emerson treats of the principles be-



hind all history, and his laconic phrases are the very honey-cells of thought."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"Within the limits of a single sentence, no man who ever wrote the English tongue has put more meaning into words than Emerson. In his hands, to adopt Ben Jonson's vigorous phrase, words 'are rammed with thought.' . . . Neither Greek precision nor Roman vigor could produce a phrase that Emerson could not match. . . . Look through all of Emerson's writings, and then consider whether in all literature you can find a man who has better fulfilled that inspiration stated in such condensed words by Joubert, 'to put a whole book into a page, a whole page into a phrase, and that phrase into a word.' After all, it is phrases and words won like this that give immortality."—*T. W. Higginson.*

"The compactness of Emerson's writings is apparent to the most careless reader. The quatrain 'Teach me your mood, O patient stars,' really includes the thought and lesson of the eight stanzas comprising one of Matthew Arnold's best known poems. He gives us saws, sayings, admonitions, flashes, glimpses, few broad constructed pictures. . . . The poems, at their best, are more concise than the prose."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"Our poet is also so terse in expression that his thoughts might be selected out and printed as epigrams. . . . Never a word too much; always the word chosen was the one inevitable word."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"From first to last he strikes one as being something extremely pure and compact, like a nut or an egg. . . . In fact, Emerson is an essence, a condensation. . . . It would be impossible to condense any of his essays; they are the last results of condensation; we can only cut them up and abridge them."—*John Burroughs.*

"Who else could thus put eternity into a nutshell? Who else could reflect the universe in a mirror no larger than the pit of the eye?"—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"You are dazzled on every page by his superabundance of compactly expressed reflection and his marvellous command of all the resources of imaginative illustration. Every paragraph is literally 'rammed with life.' A fortnight's meditation is sometimes condensed into a sentence of a couple of lines. Almost every word bears the mark of deliberate thought in its selection. . . . That wonderful compactness and condensation of statement which surprise and charm the reader of his books were due to the fact that he exerted every faculty of his mind in the act of verbal expression. A prodigal in respect to thoughts, he was still the most austere economist in the use of words. . . . The fire in him, which would instantly have dissipated ice into vapor, made the iron in him run molten and white hot into the mould of his thought when he was stirred by a great sentiment or an inspiring insight. It is admitted that he is worthy to rank among the great masters of expression; yet he was the least fluent of educated beings. In a company of swift talkers he seemed utterly helpless, until he fixed upon the right word or phrase to embody his meaning, and then the word or phrase was like a gold coin, fresh and bright from the mint and recognized as worth ten times as much as the small change of conversation which had been circulating so rapidly around the table while he was mute or stammering."—*E. P. Whipple.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Go thou to thy learned task,  
I stay with the flowers of spring:  
Go thou of the ages ask  
What me the hours will bring."

—*The Botanist.*

"The tongue is prone to lose the way,  
Not so the pen, for in a letter  
We have not better things to say,  
But surely say them better."—*Life.*

"Once slept the world, an egg of stone,  
And pulse and sound and light was none;  
And God said, 'Throb!' and there was motion,  
And the vast mass became vast ocean."—*Woodnotes.*

**5. Mysticism—Obscurity.**—"The symbols he deals with are too vast, sometimes, we must own, too vague, for the unilluminated terrestrial and arithmetical intelligence. One cannot help feeling that he might have dropped in upon some remote centre of spiritual life where the fourth dimension of space was as familiarly known to everybody as a foot-measure or a yard-stick is to us."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

"It is, perhaps, due in part to the absence from Mr. Emerson's genius of any controlling æsthetic element that he not infrequently indulges himself in mysticism, and makes his verses puzzles and enigmas not only to the common reader but even to the trained student of poetry."—*Charles Eliot Norton.*

"It must be taken for granted that Wordsworth's experience was the result and record of genuine insight, and that it cannot be curtly dismissed as 'crazy, mystical metaphysics' before Emerson can even obtain a hearing; for he undoubtedly was more crazy and mystical than Wordsworth cared to be, while independently following in the path which Wordsworth had marked out. . . . He was a man who had earned the right to utter these noble truths by patient meditation and clear insight. . . . It is this depth of spiritual experience and subtlety of spiritual insight which distinguishes Emerson from all other American authors, and makes him an elementary power as well as an elementary thinker."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"His intuitive faculty was so determined that ideality and mysticism gave him the surest promise of realities. . . . If a theist, with his intuition of an all-pervading life, he no doubt felt himself a portion of that life; and the sense of omnipresence was so clearly the dominant sense of its attributes that to call him a theist rather than a pantheist is simply

a dispute about terms. . . . One may say that his philosophical method bears to the inductive or empirical a relation similar to that between the poetry of self-expression and the poetry of æsthetic creation, a relation of the subjective to the objective. . . . If he sought first principles, he looked within himself for them."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"There is much in Emerson's works that will not stand rigid literary tests; much that is too fanciful and ethereal, too curious and paradoxical—not real or true, but only seemingly so, or so by a kind of violence or disruption. . . . Not in the poetry of any of his contemporaries is there such a burden of the mystery of things."—*John Burroughs*.

"This [a passage in "The Celestial Love"] is mysticism, and the very romance of mysticism—intelligible to some, musical to all—and breathing deeply of Plato and the Orientals."—*F. B. Sanborn*.

"The mystic obscurity of some of the poems . . . has discouraged or repelled many from the study of any of them."—*Julian Hawthorne*.

"Milton says that poetry ought to be simple, sensuous, impassioned. Well, Emerson's poetry is seldom either simple or sensuous or impassioned. In general it lacks directness; it lacks concreteness; it lacks energy. His grammar is often embarrassed; in particular, the want of clearly marked distinction between the subject and the object of his sentence is a frequent cause of obscurity in him. . . . A poem which shall be a plain, forcible, inevitable whole he hardly ever produced. . . . Even passages and single lines of thorough plainness and commanding force are rare in his works."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"What are the faults of Emerson as a thinker and a writer? The most conspicuous, doubtless, is a certain vagueness of thought and utterance. . . . His very wish to be terse sometimes makes him obscure, and oftener causes him to seem obscure."—*C. F. Richardson*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Thou art the unanswered question ;  
 Couldst see thy proper eye,  
 Always it asketh, asketh ;  
 And each answer is a lie."—*The Sphinx.*

"For Destiny never swerves,  
 Nor yields to men the helm,  
 He shoots his thought by hidden nerves  
 Throughout the solid realm."  
 —*The World-Soul.*

"A sad self-knowledge, withering, fell  
 On the beauty of Uriel ;  
 In heaven once eminent, the god  
 Withdrew, that hour, into his cloud ;  
 Whether doomed to long gyration  
 In the sea of generation,  
 Or by knowledge grown too bright  
 To hit the nerve of feeblér sight."—*Uriel.*

**6. Americanism.**—"Every American has something of Emerson in him, and the secret of the land was in the poet—the same Americanism that Whitman sees in the farmer, the deck-hand, the snag-toothed hostler, atoning with its humanities for their sins, past and present, as for the sins of Harte's gamblers and diggers of the gulch."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"He was an American in no narrow and sectional spirit. He was an idealistic American—an American of the soul, caring for freedom and morality and the seeing mind more than for Concord River or for Wachusett Mountain."—*G. W. Cooke.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"We grant no dukedoms to the few,  
 We hold like rights, and shall ;—  
 Equal on Sunday in the pew,  
 On Monday in the Mall,  
 For what avail the plough or sail,  
 Or land or life, if freedom fail ?"—*Boston.*

" God said, ' I am tired of kings,  
 I suffer them no more ;  
 Up to my ear the morning brings  
 The outrage of the poor.'  
 . . . . .

" My angel,—his name is Freedom,—  
 Choose him to be your king ;  
 He shall cut pathways east and west  
 And fend you with his wing.

" Lo ! I uncover the land  
 Which I hid of old time in the West,  
 As the sculptor uncovers the statue  
 When he has wrought his best ;

" I show Columbia, of the rocks  
 Which dip their foot in the seas  
 And soar to the air-borne flocks  
 Of clouds and the boreal fleece."

—*Boston Hymn.*

✓ **7. Appreciation of Nature.**—"Emerson doubts his power to capture the very truth of Nature. Its essence—its beauty—is so elusive. . . . But such poems as the ' Fore-runners ' show how closely he moved, after all, upon the trail of the evading sprite. He seemed, by first intention, and with an exact precision of grace and aptness, to put in phrases what he saw and felt—and he saw and felt so much more than others ! He had the aboriginal eye and the civilized sensibility ; he caught both the external and the scientific truth of natural things and their poetic charm withal. . . . Emerson's prose is full of poetry, and his poems are light and air. His modes of expression, like his epithets, are imaginative."—*E. C. Stedman.*

" Emerson's poetry of nature has the broadest range, from noon-day sky to swampy pool, from snow-capped mountain to skipping squirrel on the tree. It would be as just to call Em-

erson the poet of nature as to apply the familiar phrase to Bryant. . . . But nature in Emerson's verse is something more than mere prettiness. . . . The seer and the mystic could treat Nature in the simplest fashion when he had no other purpose in view."—*C. F. Richardson*.

"He took his allusions and his poetic material from the woods and waters around him, and wrote fearlessly even of the humble-bee."—*T. W. Higginson*.

"The perception of beauty in nature or in human nature, whether it be the beauty of a flower or of a soul, makes Emerson joyous and glad; he exults in celebrating it, and he communicates to his readers his own ecstatic mood. . . . The singular attractiveness of his writings comes from his intense perception of beauty, both in its abstract quality as the 'awful loveliness' which such poets as Shelley have celebrated and in the more concrete expression by which it fascinates ordinary minds. . . . His 'Ode to Beauty' indicates that the sense of beauty penetrated to the inmost centre of his being and was an indissoluble element in his character. . . . The sense of beauty, indeed, was so vital an element in the constitution of his being that it decorated everything it touched. His imaginative faculty, both in the conception and the creation of beauty, is uncorrupted by any morbid sentiment. His vision reaches to the very source of beauty—the beauty that cheers."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"An intense love of nature and a keen perception of the beauties of the external world, are manifested in every page of his writings."—*C. C. Felton*.

"Both his poetry and his prose abound with lively descriptions of nature, and show the utmost delight in every sight and sound of the material world. . . . Nature is shown not merely as a background or theatre for man's activities but as a source of beauty and strength, working with and for us, and always leading us to worship. . . . When a man has a sincere admiration and awe in the presence of the works of

the Creator he will be in a mood to estimate Emerson at his true value."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"His observation of Nature is always marvellously close and fine."—*Matthew Arnold.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"For Nature beats in perfect time,  
And rounds with rhyme her every rune,  
Whether she work in land or sea,  
Or hide underground her alchemy.  
Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,  
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,  
But it carves the bow of beauty there,  
And theripples in rhyme the oar forsake."—*Nature.*

"Oh, when I am safe in my sylvan home,  
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome ;  
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,  
Where the evening star so holy shines,  
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,  
At the sophist schools and the learned clan,  
For what are they all, in their high conceit,  
When man in the bush with God may meet ? "  
—*Good-Bye.*

"Then I said, ' I covet truth ;  
Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat ;  
I leave it behind with the games of youth :  
As I spoke, beneath my feet  
The ground pine curled its pretty wreath,  
Running over the club-moss burrs ;  
I inhaled the violet's breath ;  
Around me stood the oaks and firs ;  
Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground ;  
Over me soared the eternal sky,  
Full of light and of deity ;



Again I saw, again I heard,  
 The rolling river, the morning bird ;—  
 Beauty through my senses stole ;  
 I yielded myself to the perfect whole."

—*Each and All.*

### 8. Frequent Crudity in Thought and Style.—

"His verse, often diamond-like in contrast with the feldspar of others, at times is ill-cut and beclouded. . . . It becomes a question whether his discords are those of an undeveloped artist or the sudden craft of one who knows all art and can afford to be on easy terms with it. I think there is evidence on both sides. . . . It should be noted that Emerson's vision of the sublime in scientific discovery increased his distaste for mere style, and moved him to contentment with the readiest mode of expression. . . . There was, it must be owned, a tinge of provincial arrogance, and there were expressions a little less than ludicrous in his early defiance of usage."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"Not even Wordsworth pressed so dangerously as did Emerson at times the borderland of what is bald or juvenile or apparently silly. . . . We sometimes find art, sometimes artlessness, sometimes deliberate crudity. Emerson's reflections in the 'transcendental mood' do, beyond question, sometimes irresistibly suggest the close neighborhood between the sublime and the ridiculous. . . . Emerson's most conspicuous fault is a certain vagueness of thought and utterance. He maunders along in well-balanced sentences, which are not devoid of sense, separately, but which combine into no consistent or valuable whole. It not infrequently happens that the whole is less than the sum of all its parts."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"He made desperate work, now and then, with rhyme and rhythm, showing that, though a born poet, he was not a born singer."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

"Mr. Emerson is still careless about the way in which his thought embodies itself, and fails to guard his poetry against

the attacks of time by casting his poem in perfect and imperishable forms. . . . If there be much of the Greek philosopher in his composition, there is very little of the Greek artist."—*Charles Eliot Norton*.

"He is an extravagant, erratic genius, setting all authority at defiance, sometimes writing with the pen of an angel (if angels ever write), and sometimes gravely propounding the most amazing nonsense."—*C. C. Felton*.

"Even passages and single lines of thorough plainness are rare in his poetry. They exist, of course; but when we meet them, they give us a slight shock of surprise, so little has Emerson accustomed us to them. . . . He is not plain and concrete enough, in other words, not poetic enough; . . . and a failure of this kind goes through almost all his verse, keeps him amid symbolisms and allusion and the fringes of things; and in spite of his spiritual power, deeply impairs his poetic value. . . . His style has not the requisite wholeness of good tissue."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"And why are these verses—too often rude, harsh, or fantastic—to outlive the more polished and melodious poetry of other men? First, because of their superior tone. . . . He lamented his imperfect use of the metrical faculty, which he felt all the more keenly in contrast with the melodious thoughts he had to utter and the fitting words in which he could clothe these thoughts. He would have written much more in verse if he had been content with his own metrical expression as constantly as he was delighted with it sometimes. But it is also true that he purposely roughened his work."—*F. B. Sanborn*.

"He uses words that are not only odd but vicious in construction; he is not always grammatically correct; and he is often clumsy; and there is a visible feeling after epigrams that do not always come."—*John Morley*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Mighty projects countermanded ;  
 Rash ambition, broken handed ;  
 Puny man and scentless rose  
 Tormenting Pan to double the dose."

—*Alphonso of Castile.*

"The maiden in danger  
 Was saved by the swain ;  
 His stout arm restored her  
 To Broadway again.

"The maid would reward him,—  
 Gay company come,—  
 They laugh, she laughs with them ;  
 He is moonstruck and dumb."—*Tact.*

"He [Cupid] affects the wood and wild,  
 Like a flower-hunting child ;  
 Buries himself in summer waves,  
 In trees, with beasts, in mines and caves,  
 Loves nature like a hornèd cow,  
 Bird, or deer, or caribou."—*The Initial Love.*

✓ 9. Spontaneity—Lyric Power.—"At times I think him the first of our lyric poets, his turns are so wild and unexpected. . . . He often captures us with absolute beauty, the poetry that poets love—the lilt and melody of Shelley—joined to precision of thought and outline. . . . He had written poems of which the whole and the parts were at least justly related masterpieces—lyrical masterpieces. . . . The opening [of "The Sphinx"] is strongly lyrical and impressive."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"The poetry of Emerson is valued, at least in some of its parts, both by those who find enjoyment in lyrical expression of common and laborious meditation or observation and by those who are willing to give to verse a deep study."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"Mr. Emerson's poetic genius seems as little modified by conscious will—as simply natural and inartistic—as the genius of the pine or hemlock."—*Charles Eliot Norton*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Spring still makes spring in the mind  
When sixty years are told ;  
Love wakes anew this throbbing heart,  
And we are never old.  
Over the winter glaciers  
I see the summer glow,  
And through the wild-piled snow-drift,  
The warm rosebuds below."—*The World-Soul*.

"Hearken ! Hearken !  
If thou wouldst know the mystic song  
Chanted when the sphere was young.  
Aloft, abroad, the pæan swells ;  
O wise man ! hear'st thou half it tells ?  
O wise man ! hear'st thou the least part ?  
'Tis the chronicle of art.  
To the open ear it sings  
Sweet the genesis of things,  
Of tendency through endless ages,  
Of star dust and star-pilgrimages ;  
Of rounded worlds, of space and time,  
Of the old flood's subsiding slime,  
Of chemic matter, force, and form,  
Of poles and powers, cold, wet, and warm ;  
The rushing metamorphosis  
Dissolving all that fixture is,  
Melts things that be to things that seem  
And solid nature to a dream."—*Woodnotes*, II.

**10. Precision.**—"Finally, this poet's scenic joinery is so true, so mortised with the one apt word, . . . and the one best word or phrase is so unlooked for that, as I say, we scarcely know whether this comes by grace of instinct or with

search and artistic foresight. . . . He was born with an unrivalled faculty of selection. . . . As he triumphed over the untruthfulness of the mere verse-maker and the dullness of the moralist, his instant, sure, yet airy transcripts gave his poems of nature a quality without a counterpart. . . . Over and over again, he asserted his conviction that every word should be the right word."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"His subtle selective instinct penetrates the vocabulary for the one word he wants, as the long slender bill of those birds (the *tenui-rostrals*) dives deep into the flower for its drop of honey."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"Neither Greek precision nor Roman vigor could produce a phrase that Emerson could not match."—*T. W. Higginson*.

"His own pride is always to have the ready change, to speak the exact and proper word, to give to every occasion the dignity of wise speech."—*John Burroughs*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The prosperous and beautiful  
To me seem not to wear  
The yoke of conscience masterful,  
Which galls me everywhere."—*The Park*.

"The housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm."  
—*The Snow-Storm*.

"Thy trivial harp will never please  
Or fill my craving ear;  
Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,  
Free, peremptory, clear.  
No jingling serenader's art,  
Nor tinkle of piano strings,  
Can make the wild blood start  
In its mystic springs.

The kingly bard  
Must smite the chords rudely and hard,  
As with hammer or with mace."—*Merlin*.

**ix. Suggestiveness — Intellectuality.** — Emerson himself well defines this characteristic of his own style, when he says: "The most interesting writing is that which does not quite satisfy the reader. Try and leave a little thinking for him; that will be better for you both. The trouble with most writers is they spread too thin. The reader is as quick as they; has got there before them, and is ready and waiting. A little guessing does him no harm, so I would assist him with no connection. If you can see how the harness fits, so can he. But make sure that you can see it."

"He has the immense advantage of suggesting something new to the diligent reader after he has read him for the fiftieth time. . . . His sentences have furnished texts for sermons; his paragraphs have been expanded into volumes, and open minds, representing every variety of creed, have gladly appropriated and worked out, after their own fashion, hints and impulses derived from the creedless thinker and seer."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"The essays cannot be said to contain any system of religion, morals, or philosophy. The most that can be affirmed is that they are full of significant hints upon all these subjects, from which the author's opinions, if he had any, may be inferred."—*C. C. Felton*.

"We look upon him as one of the few men of genius whom our age has produced, and there needs no better proof of it than his masculine faculty of fecundating other minds."—*Lowell*.

"From that time I have never ceased to read Emerson's works; and whenever I take up a volume, it seems to me as if I were reading it for the first time. . . . He sometimes makes wonderfully simple observations, which yet disentangle the most intricate trains of thought."—*Grimm*.

"His poetry is interesting, it makes one think ; but it is not the poetry of one of the born poets. I say it of him with reluctance, because I dislike giving pain to his admirers."  
—*Matthew Arnold.*

"Even in his poems that apparently run rapidly on, each line is packed with thought."—*C. F. Richardson.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Can rules or tutors educate  
The semigod whom we await?  
He must be musical,  
Tremulous, impressional,  
Alive to gentle influence  
Of landscape and of sky,  
And tender to the spirit touch  
Of man's or maiden's eye."—*Culture.*

"Open innumerable doors,  
The heaven where unveiled Allah pours  
The flood of truth, the flood of good,  
The Seraph's and the Cherub's food.  
Those doors are men ; the Pariah hind  
Admits them to the perfect Mind."—*Saadi.*

"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?  
Loved the wood-rose and left it on its stalk?  
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?  
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?  
And loved so well a high behavior  
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,  
Nobility more nobly to repay?  
O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine."

—*Forbearance.*

**12. Transcendentalism.**—"Against materialism Emerson preached a spiritual, self-centred idealism. But still another element was present in all that he taught. It was the

element of reverential communion with nature and with the spirit from which nature came and under which it works. At its worst and vaguest, this spirit of Transcendentalism was akin to a loose and profitless Pantheism; at its best, it was a helper of the highest and truest thing in humanity, its spiritual part. He restated for the modern world the eternal principles of transcendentalism, of spiritualism, of the inner light, never lost since the days of Plato."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"There is always the idea of soul, central and pervading, of which Nature's forms are but the created symbols. . . . Few have had Emerson's inward eye, but it is well that some have not been restricted to it. . . . His voice comes 'like a falling star' from a skyey dome of pure abstraction. . . . If a theist, with his intuition of an all-pervading life, he no doubt felt himself a portion of that life, and the sense of omnipresence was so clearly the dominant sense of its attributes that to call him a theist instead of a pantheist is merely a dispute about terms. . . . One may say that his philosophical method bears to the inductive or empirical a relation similar to that between the poetry of self-expression and the poetry of æsthetic creation, a relation of the subjective to the objective. . . . If he sought first principles, he looked within himself for them. . . . I think that the weakness of 'transcendental' art is as fairly manifested in Emerson's first and chief collection of verse as were its felicities. . . . It is true that he was not the prince of transcendentalists but the prince of idealists. . . . Emerson, a man of our time, while a transcendentalist, looking inward rather than to books for his wisdom, studied well the past, and earlier sages were the faculty of his school."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"Human personality presented itself to Emerson as a passing phase of universal being. . . . Born of the Infinite, to the Infinite it was to return. Sometimes he treats his own personality as interchangeable with objects in nature—he would put it off like a garment and clothe himself in the land-



scape. . . . The difference between Emerson's poetry and that of his contemporaries, with whom he would be naturally compared, is that of algebra and arithmetic. He deals largely in general symbols, abstractions, and infinite series. He is always seeing the universal in the particular."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"I contrasted the coolness of this transcendentalist, whenever he discussed matters relating to the conduct of human life, with the fury of delusion under which merchants of established reputation sometimes seemed to be laboring in their mad attempts to resist the operations of the natural laws of trade."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Mr. Emerson is a transcendentalist whose nervous energy has been exalted, and whose viscera and animal spirits have been burnt away."—*Edward Dowden*.

"He liked to explain the transcendentalists, but did not care at all to be explained by them."—*Henry James*.

"Mr. Emerson is not to be confounded with any class, though he has strong affinities with the transcendentalists."—*C. C. Felton*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Is it that my opulent soul  
Was mingled from the generous whole;  
Sea-valleys and the deep of skies  
Furnished several supplies;  
And the sands whereof I'm made  
Draw me to them, self-betrayed?"

—*Ode to Beauty*.

"Onward and on, the eternal Pan,  
Who layeth the world's incessant plan,  
Halteth never in one shape,  
But forever doth escape,  
Like wave or flame, into new forms  
Of gem and air, of plants and worms."

—*Woodnotes, II.*

" If thou trowest  
 How the chemic eddies play,  
 Pole to pole, and what they say ;  
 And that these gray crags  
 Not on crags are hung,  
 But beads are of a rosary  
 On prayer and music strung ;  
 And, credulous, through the granite seeming,  
 Seest the smile of Reason beaming ;—  
 Can thy style-discerning eye  
 The hidden-working Builder spy,  
 Who builds, yet makes no chips, no din,  
 With hammer soft as snowflakes flight ;—  
 Knowest thou this ?  
 O pilgrim, wandering not amiss !  
 Already my rocks lie light,  
 And soon my cone will spin."—*Monadnoc.*

**13. Lack of Logical Sequence.**—"This was Emerson's method—not to write a perfect poem, a poem that should be an inevitable whole, . . . but to write the perfect line, to set the imagination ablaze with a single verse, leaving the effects of form, of proportion, to be achieved by those who were equipped for it."—*John Burroughs.*

" They [Emerson's poems] are too naked, unrelated, and cosmic ; too little clad with the vesture of human associations. . . . Everything is thrown in just as it comes, and sometimes the pell-mell is enough to persuade us that Pope did not exaggerate when he said that no one qualification is so likely to make a good writer as the power of rejecting his own thoughts. . . . 'Can you tell me,' asked one of his neighbors, while Emerson was lecturing, 'what connection there is between that last sentence and the one that went before it, and what connection it all has with Plato?' 'None, my friend, save in God,' was the reply. . . . As he says of Landor, his sentences are cubes which will stand firm,

place them how or where you will. . . . One of the traces that every critic notices in Emerson's writings is that it is so abrupt, so sudden in its transitions, so discontinuous, so inconsecutive."—*John Morley*.

"Incompleteness—want of beginning, middle, and end—is their [Emerson's poems] too common fault."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"There is a certain impression left on the mind of Emerson's readers which may be described as fragmentary. . . . Philosophers and prophets do not feel bound to produce epics in twelve books or dramas in five acts or even blank verse poems fifty pages long. When Emerson had had his say in verse he stopped. . . . Emerson as a writer has been compared to that minister who gradually filled a barrel with separately written pages and picked out enough for a sermon when Sunday came. Again, it has been said that Emerson's essays would read as well backward as forward, sentence by sentence. . . . In poetry, as in prose, Emerson prepared his bits of material when he would, and afterward elaborated them into symmetrical wholes at leisure or fit occasion."—*C. F. Richardson*.

"Emerson cannot, I think, with justice be called a great philosophical writer. He cannot build; his arrangement of philosophical ideas has no progress in it, no evolution; he does not construct a philosophy. . . . Emerson himself formulates perfectly the defect of his own philosophical productions when he speaks of his 'formidable tendency to the lapidary style.' 'I build my house of bowlders,' he says again, 'with very little system, and as regards composition, with most fragmentary results; paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle.' Nothing can be truer."—*Matthew Arnold*.

"It [a certain lecture] was as if, after vainly trying to get his paragraphs into sequence and order, he had tried at last the desperate expedient of shuffling them. It was chaos come

again, but it was a chaos full of shooting stars, a jumble of creating forces."—*Lowell*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" The fate of the man-child,  
The meaning of man ;  
Known fruit of the unknown ;  
Dædalian plan ;  
Out of sleeping a waking,  
Out of waking a sleep ;  
Life death overtaking ;  
Deep underneath deep ?"—*The Sphinx*.

" Mine and yours ;  
Mine, not yours.  
Earth endures ;  
Stars abide—  
Shine down in the old sea ;  
Old are the shores ;  
But where are the old men ?  
I who have seen much,  
Such have I never seen."—*Hamatreya*.

" The rhyme of the poet  
Modulates the king's affairs ;  
Balance-loving Nature  
Made all things in pairs.  
To every foot its antipode ;  
Each color with its counter glowed ;  
To every tone beat answering tones,  
Higher or graver ;  
Flavor gladly blends with flavor ;  
Leaf answers leaf upon the bough ;  
And match the paired cotyledons."—*Merlin*.

## BRYANT, 1794-1878

**Biographical Outline.**—William Cullen Bryant, born November 3, 1794, in Cummington, Mass. ; father a skilful physician and surgeon, of fine literary and musical taste and some knowledge of Greek, Latin, and French, who was for several years a member of the Legislature of Massachusetts ; mother a woman of remarkably sensitive moral judgment ; Bryant is precocious as a child, but nervous, puny, and delicate ; in 1797 the family remove to Plainfield, a village near Cummington, but return in 1798 to a farm near Cummington owned by Bryant's maternal grandfather ; owing to the absence of schools in the vicinity, Bryant, with his six brothers and sisters, receives his early education mainly from his parents, who provided for their children such books as the works of Hume, Plutarch, Shakespeare, and nearly all the acknowledged classic English writers of that day ; Pope, Cowper, Spenser, and Wordsworth seem to have been Bryant's early favorites ; he once told Parke Godwin that, while yet a boy, he had read "The Faerie Queene" many times through ; the children of the family were subjected to severe Puritan discipline, and corporal punishment was common ; Bryant worked with his brothers on the grandfather's farm during the summer ; there was little society, and all communication with the outside world was made on horseback ; while living at Cummington Bryant attends a district school, where he masters the common branches, and is faithfully drilled in the catechism ; he is also taught the rudiments of Latin and French by his father ; Bryant begins to make verses in his eighth year, and, at ten, delivers before his school an address written

in heroic couplets, which is published in the county paper and is used as a stock piece for recitation in other schools ; he is asked by his grandfather to versify the first chapter of Job, and continues till he has versified the whole narrative ; Bryant's early poetic efforts are ridiculed by his father, but he continues, and his account in verse of the eclipses of 1806 is still preserved ; later he wins his father's favor by an apostrophe in verse to Jefferson, severely satirizing that statesman, who was intensely disliked by the Federalist physician ; this satire of over five hundred lines was published in Boston in 1808 by Bryant's father in pamphlet form under the title "The Embargo, or Sketches of the Times ; a Satire by a Youth of Thirteen ;" the first edition was exhausted in a year, and in 1809 appeared "a second edition, corrected and enlarged, together with the Spanish Revolution and Other Poems. By William Cullen Bryant ;" about this time Bryant also writes a creditable metrical version of David's lament over Saul and Jonathan, his first effort in blank verse.

In November, 1808, he goes to reside with his uncle, the Rev. Thomas Snell, at Brookfield, Mass., and there begins preparation for college ; he soon develops ability to read difficult Latin, and, at his father's request, renders parts of the "Æneid" into English verse ; he begins Mrs. Radcliffe's "Romance of the Forest," but is dissuaded by his uncle, who tells him that such works have "an unwholesome influence ;" he has Amasa Walker as a fellow-student under Dr. Snell's instruction ; in eight months Bryant reads all of the "Æneid," the "Eclogues," the "Georgics," and Cicero's "Orations ;" he spends the summer of 1809 working in the hayfield on his grandfather's farm, and is reproved for resting from his work to "make vases ;" in August, 1809, Bryant goes to the Rev. Moses Hallock, of Plainfield, Mass., to learn Greek, and pays one dollar a week for board and tuition ; he makes such rapid progress that, as he says, "At the end of two calendar months I knew the Greek New Testament from

end to end almost as if it had been English ;" he returns to Cummington late in October, 1809, and there continues his college preparatory studies during the winter without a tutor ; in the spring of 1810 he returns for a time to Plainfield, where he is instructed in mathematics by Hallock ; in September, 1810, Bryant attends, with his father, the Commencement exercises at Williams College, and easily passes examinations admitting him as a Sophomore.

He enters Williams October 8, 1810 ; at that time the college Faculty consisted of the president, one professor, and two tutors ; Bryant says in his " Autobiography : " " I mastered the daily lesson given out to my class, and found much time for miscellaneous reading, for disputations [in a literary society], and for literary composition in prose and verse ; " in the summer of 1811, before the close of his first year at Williams, Bryant, influenced by the example of his room-mate, John Avery, decides to enter Yale, obtains from Williams an honorable dismissal, and returns, in May, 1811, to his home at Cummington, where he studies to prepare himself for entering the Junior Class at Yale ; however, for financial reasons, his father finds it impossible to send the son to Yale, and so Bryant's college career is comprised in the part of a year at Williams, which he afterward regretted leaving ; while studying at home at this period he becomes interested in his father's medical books, and acquires from them a considerable knowledge of chemistry and botany—" meantime I read all the poetry that came in my way ; " while at Williams he had rendered Anacreon's " Ode on Spring " with such merit that his college-mates mistook it for Moore's, with which they compared it, both being unsigned ; he continues his Greek studies after leaving college, making translations in prose from Lucian and in verse from Anacreon, Mimnernus, Colophon, Bion, and Sophocles ; Bryant also now renews his long rambles in field and forest, and, inspired by Kirk White's " Melodies of Death," he writes " Thanatopsis," beginning

the first sketch with the line, "Yet a few days," etc. ; "Thanatopsis" was written in October, 1811, but the manuscript was carefully hidden in Bryant's father's desk, without being subjected to criticism or inspection.

Bryant was originally intended for the practice of medicine—the profession of his ancestors for three generations—but later his father decided to make him a lawyer, and in December, 1811, the son enters the law office of one Mr. Howe, of Worthington, Mass.; he studies with fair diligence, but continues to versify and botanize; he is strongly inspired by reading Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads," but his legal preceptor warns him against such reading as a "sad waste of time;" during 1812-13 Bryant writes but one poem, a Fourth of July ode, written at the request of a Boston society, made through Bryant's father; while at Worthington, Bryant is fascinated by the daughter of a distinguished friend of his father's, and writes fragments of love-verses (never published), but the relationship is soon broken off; in June, 1814, he removes to the law office of Mr. William Baylies, of Bridgewater, Mass., a much larger town than Worthington; he is most eager to finish his legal course in Boston, but his father's financial circumstances will not permit it; Bryant devotes himself closely to study at Bridgewater, determining, as he wrote to a friend, "to tune the rural lay no more, . . . but leave the race of bards to scribble, starve, and freeze;" he writes another Fourth of July ode in 1814, deploring our war with England and denouncing Napoleon; he is entrusted with the business of the office during the absence of his preceptor in Congress; he passes the preliminary test for admission to the bar August 9, 1814; in correspondence with his preceptor at this time, Bryant manifests a warm interest in public affairs; he even proposes to enter the army, but an attack of pulmonary disease compels him to go home and spend the month of November at Cummington; during the intense political struggle of the day Bryant becomes a rabid



Federalist, and speaks of President Madison as "his imbecility;" he proposes to join the State militia, "being ashamed to stay at home when everybody besides was gone," and foreseeing, he thinks, a civil war; he is appointed an adjutant in the Massachusetts militia in July, 1816, but the Peace of Ghent causes his services to be uncalled for.

He passes his final legal examination and is admitted to the Court of Common Pleas August 15, 1815; at this time he again devotes himself to a minute study of nature, and sketches several nature poems; he writes "The Yellow Violet" just before his admission to the bar, and the "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood" about the same time; in December, 1815, on his way to Plainfield, Mass., where he proposed to settle as a lawyer, he sees a wild duck flying homeward and, while walking, composes the lines "To a Waterfowl;" after remaining eight months at Plainfield, he removes to Great Barrington, Mass., where he becomes a partner of one G. H. Ives; soon afterward he suffers a second attack of pulmonary disease; he is urged by his father to contribute in prose or verse to the *North American Review*, then recently established in Boston and edited by Phillips, a friend of Bryant's father; but Bryant does not respond, having apparently resolved to abandon the muses; meanwhile the father discovers the manuscript of "Thanatopsis" and himself carries it to Phillips; R. H. Dana, then one of the owners of the *Review*, declares the manuscript an imposture and says, "No one on this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verses;" "Thanatopsis" was first published in the *North American Review* for September, 1817, and was then prefixed with four stanzas on death, found by Bryant's father with the manuscript, but having no connection with the poem and not intended by Bryant for publication; this forbidding introduction prevented "Thanatopsis" from attracting much attention at first except from the critics, who still supposed it to have been written by Bryant's father; in July, 1818, Bryant publishes

in the *Review* an essay on American poetry, being a review of a collection of American verses then just published ; in this article he "dismisses the poetical pretensions of the rhymers who were then in vogue ;" in 1819 he publishes in the *Review* an essay on "Trisyllabic Feet in Iambic Verse."

While in Great Barrington he holds successively the offices of tithing-man, town-clerk, and Justice of the Peace ; his father dies of pulmonary disease in March, 1820 ; early in 1820 Bryant promises to contribute several hymns to a Unitarian collection then forming ; later he delivers at Stockbridge, Mass., a Fourth of July oration, in which he makes his first public protest against slavery ; during 1820 he also contributes to *The Idle Man* (a periodical then just established by Dana) "The Yellow Violet" and "Green River," the latter poem having been picked out of his waste-basket ; later he contributes to the same periodical "A Winter Piece," "The West Wind," "The Burial Place," and "A Walk at Sunset ;" during 1820 Bryant becomes betrothed to Miss Fanny Fairchild, the orphaned daughter of a well-to-do farmer living near Great Barrington, and they are married at that village June 11, 1821 ; soon after his marriage Bryant is invited to deliver the usual poetical address before the Phi Beta Kappa society of Harvard University at the next Commencement ; he complies, and reads at Harvard, August 20, 1821, the poem entitled "The Ages ;" while in Boston he first meets the Danas, the Channings, and other prominent people, and has in his audience Allston, both the Adamses, the Quinceys, Story, Webster, and Edward Everett ; while there he also yields to the importunity of Dana and others, and prepares for publication a pamphlet of forty-four pages, containing eight of the best of his poems, namely : "The Ages," "To a Waterfowl," "A Fragment from Simonides," "An Inscription for an Entrance to a Wood," "The Yellow Violet," "Green River," "The Song," and "Thanatopsis" — "such poems as had never appeared before in American lit-

erature ;" the same year (1821) gave birth to some of the best productions of Cooper, Irving, Halleck, Dana, Percival, Channing, and Webster ; Bryant's pamphlet received recognition in *Blackwood's Magazine* ; he is urged by Dana and others to write a long poem, but he refuses, insisting that " there is no such thing as a long poem ;" in 1823 he writes a farce, satirizing the practice of duelling, then common at the South ; it is submitted for criticism to Henry Sedgwick, who advises against publication, but incidentally urges Bryant to settle in New York and to become a contributor to the *Atlantic Magazine*, then published there ; Bryant accordingly visits New York on a tour of inspection in April, 1824, and there meets Cooper, Halleck, and Sparks ; during 1823-25 he contributes to the then newly established *United States Literary Gazette* (Boston) nearly thirty poems, including " Monument Mountain," " November," " To a Cloud," " The Lapse of Time," " A Forest Hymn," " March," " The Rivulet," " Autumn Woods," and " After the Tempest ;" for such work Bryant asks but \$2 a poem, but the editor offered him \$200 a year for an average of one hundred lines a month ; his profits on his first book of poems are less than \$15 ; to the same magazine, at the same time, an unknown writer signing himself " H. W. L." contributes several poems, as does Percival ; the publishers of the *Gazette* soon afterward issue a volume of " Miscellaneous Poems," including the work of all three poets ; about this time Bryant begins but never finishes a longer narrative poem entitled " The Spectre Ship ;" he writes also numerous reviews of American literature current at the time.

Although he is successful and, by 1824, has argued cases before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, he continually manifests a disposition to leave law for literature ; he visits New York again in January, 1825, meets many literary men, and an attempt is made to found a new magazine with Bryant as editor, but the project fails, partially because he is a Unitarian ; he returns to New York in March, 1825, when *The*

*Atlantic Magazine* and *The Literary Review* are merged into *The New York Review*, with Bryant as joint editor with H. J. Anderson, former editor of *The Atlantic Magazine*; Bryant leaves his family in Great Barrington, and takes lodgings in New York, but is joined by his family in the autumn; in April, 1825, he delivers before the Athenæum Society of New York four lectures on Poetry; during the winters of 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1831, he lectures on Mythology before the then newly formed National Academy of Arts; meantime he publishes in his *New York Review* his poems entitled "The Song of Pitcairn's Island," "The Skies," "Lines on Re-visiting a Cemetery," "I Cannot Forget," "To a Mosquito," "The Death of the Flowers," "The New Moon," "A Hymn to Death," "An Indian Girl's Lament," and "A Meditation on Rhode Island Coal," besides many prose articles, chiefly critical; the *Review* changes names twice during 1826, and gradually expires; meantime Bryant takes out a license to practise in the courts of New York, and does some legal work in connection with Henry Sedgwick; during the summer of 1826 he becomes temporarily editor of the *Evening Post*, pending the decision of Dana, to whom the editorship had been offered; he acts as subordinate editor during 1827 and 1828, finding the work, at least financially, "better than poetry and magazines;" during 1828, 1829, and 1830 he edits an annual called "The Talisman," to which he contributes his poems entitled "To the Past," "The Evening Wind," and several others; on the death of the chief editor and owner of the *Evening Post*, in July, 1829, Bryant becomes chief editor and a partial owner; he strongly supports President Jackson, and once inflicts corporal chastisement on a political adversary; he writes almost no poetry from 1829 to 1835; in 1831 he publishes a volume containing eighty poems—all he had written since his pamphlet of 1821; this volume serves to place Bryant, in the opinion (then expressed) of critics like Longfellow and Prescott, "at

the head of our poetic literature ; " through the good offices of Irving, then living in England, Bryant's poems are reprinted in London in March, 1832, with a dedication (written by Irving) to Samuel Rogers ; the volume is well received in England, being highly praised by Professor Wilson in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

During the spring of 1832 Bryant visits his brothers, who had settled in Illinois, and, while there, accidentally meets Lincoln, then " a tall, awkward, uncouth lad," leading a company of volunteers to the Blackhawk Indian War ; on his return he settles with his family in Hoboken, N. J., to avoid the cholera, then raging in New York, but he remains at his post as editor throughout that terrible summer ; he warmly supports President Jackson's Union proclamation in December, 1832 ; he also supports Jackson in his memorable struggle against the United States Bank, and thus incurs much popular hostility ; he visits Canada, with his wife, in 1833 ; early in 1834 Bryant and his paper are frequently threatened with violence by anti-abolition mobs ; he sails for France, June 24, 1834, spends several weeks in Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, and goes thence to Italy, where he remains four months, chiefly at Rome, Naples, Florence, and Pisa ; thence by the Tyrol to Munich for three months, and thence to Heidelberg for four months ; he meets Longfellow in Heidelberg, and reaches home March 26, 1836 ; on his return he declines a public dinner offered him by Irving, Halleck, and others, and begins his life-long struggle for international copyright ; in 1836 he publishes another edition of his poems, this time through the Harpers, and receives \$125 for the first twenty-five hundred copies ; he grows weary of journalism and of city life, and seriously proposes to remove to the prairies of Illinois ; he becomes unpopular by his editorial opposition to " fiat money," usury laws, and the slave-trade, and suffers some social ostracism ; he first meets Parke Godwin in 1836, and soon afterward employs him as an assistant editor ; in 1837 Bryant opposes

the attitude of his friend, President Van Buren, toward slavery, but supports his financial policy; in August, 1837, he is challenged to a duel by one Holland, an editor of the *Times*, but avoids the trouble by a skilful reply; in his long walks about New York he becomes "a most indefatigable tramp;" he frequently entertains Cooper, Halleck, Longfellow, and Audubon, and brings out Dana's "Two Years before the Mast" after the manuscript has been repeatedly rejected; he vigorously satirizes "the singing campaign" of Harrison in 1840; during the summer he roams through the Catskills with Cole, the artist, and with Cole names many of the wild points in that region (see Bryant's poem "The Catterskill Falls"); he incurs popular hostility for refusing to put his paper into mourning dress on the death of Harrison; in the spring of 1841 he again visits Illinois, where the wolves were still howling on the prairies; in 1842 he vigorously opposes "the black tariff," and both lectures and writes in support of homœopathy; during February of this year he is formally entertained at a breakfast given in his honor by Dickens, whose first inquiry after landing was, "Where is Bryant?" Bryant afterward entertains Dickens at his own home, and later publishes, at the request of Dickens, the address of the latter to the American people in favor of international copyright; during 1842 Bryant also prepares a new volume of his poems, the Harpers having then sold five editions of the earlier volume; the new volume includes "The Painted Cup," "The Antiquity of Freedom," "The Fountain," "An Evening Reverie," and sixteen others written since his return from Europe; in the spring of 1843 he makes a tour through the South, spends a month among the cotton-planters of South Carolina, listening to their defence of their favorite "Institution," and then revels in the delights of a tropical spring in Florida; during the same spring he buys "forty acres of solid earth . . . on the north side of Long Island," to which he gives the name of Roslyn, for a country home.

In the summer of 1843 Bryant joins David Dudley Field and others in publishing a manifesto against the annexation of Texas ; he sails again for Europe, April 22, 1845, in company with Charles Leupp, an artist friend ; he lands at Liverpool, visits James Martineau, and reaches London in June ; he is given a public dinner in London by Edward Everett, then our British Minister, and meets there Samuel Rogers, Monckton Milnes, Thomas Moore, and other literary lights ; later he meets Cobden, Bright, Fox, Hallam, Lyell, Whewell, Faraday, and Herschel (the last five at Cambridge) ; Bryant takes up his residence at Leamington, whence he makes long pedestrian and carriage tours to Oxford, Blenheim, Warwick, etc. ; he meets Wordsworth at Windermere in July, being presented by Crabbe Robinson ; he goes thence to Edinburgh, Ireland, London, and Paris ; thence by way of the Netherland cities to Heidelberg, Nuremberg, Leipsic, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Trieste, Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, Genoa, Milan, walking over the Simplon by moonlight, and so to Geneva and back to Paris and London (see his "Letters of Travel") ; he returns to New York and to his home at Roslyn in November, 1845 ; during 1845-46 Bryant writes "The Stream of Life," "The Unknown Way," and "The Wandering Moon," and prepares a new edition of his older poetry, first submitting all his poems to the criticism of his friend Dana, with the intention of omitting from the new edition any disapproved by Dana ; Bryant adopts most of Dana's suggestions and, by his advice, omits none of the poems ; during the year 1846 he again visits his mother and brothers in Illinois, and returns by way of Lake Michigan and Mackinaw ; the new volume of poems appears in December, and is received with unabated public favor ; during 1846, Bryant also begins his correspondence with Longfellow ; in May, 1847, he loses his mother, to whom he refers in the poem beginning "May Sun sheds an amber light."

During the summer of 1847 he visits Boston, Portland,

Augusta, and the White Mountains, which he declares equal to those of Switzerland except for the snow-capped peaks ; on May 4, 1848, Bryant delivers, by invitation of the Academy of Design, a glowing eulogy on his friend Thomas Cole, the artist ; in the summer of 1848 he joins with the editors of several other prominent journals in a call for a convention of "all who are in favor of free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men," and later he becomes a fervent supporter of Van Buren in his presidential campaign ; early in 1849 Bryant secures John Bigelow as an assistant editor of the *Post*, and thus obtains more leisure for travel ; he starts for Cuba in March, 1849, stopping in South Carolina and Florida, and reaching Havana April 7th ; spends a month in Cuba, where the treatment of the slaves greatly intensifies his feeling against the "institution ;" soon after returning to New York he starts, June 13, 1849, on a third trip to Europe, again having Leupp as a companion ; he spends much time in the public and private picture galleries of London ; thence to the Orkney and Shetland Islands by way of Edinburgh and Perth, and thence to the Continent, which he finds "filled with soldiers ;" to Munich by way of Stuttgart, thence to Switzerland, and back to New York in December ; soon after his return he publishes, at the request of G. P. Putnam, a volume of his letters of travel, written from Illinois, Mackinaw, the South, Cuba, and Europe ; he devotes much time to the improvement of his estate at Roslyn, to which he becomes devotedly attached ; in 1850 he strongly opposes Henry Clay's "Compromise Measure."

In February, 1852, at the request of the New York Historical Society, Bryant delivers an address on Cooper, then lately deceased, Webster being the presiding officer on the occasion, and Irving one of the guests ; in 1852, becoming disgusted with the indifference of the Free Soil party toward slavery and the tariff, Bryant supports Pierce in his presidential campaign ; late in this year he abandons Pierce, and



becomes a warm supporter of the Free Soil movement in Kansas; in November, 1852, he sails for the Orient, with Leupp again as a companion; while passing through London he meets "a blue-stocking lady who writes for the *Westminster Review*, named Evans, and a Mr. Spenser, a bookseller;" he is in Paris on the day of the proclamation of the second empire; thence, by way of Lyons, Marseilles, Genoa, Naples, and Malta, to Alexandria; thence to Cairo and up the Nile as far as the first Cataract; thence on camel-back across "the little desert," reaching Jerusalem February 13, 1853; he visits Nazareth, Tyre, Damascus, etc., and crosses from Beyrut to Constantinople; thence to Smyrna, Athens, Corinth, Trieste, Venice, etc., back to Paris, and reaches home in June, 1853, completely disguised in a long white beard, and "begins grinding at the mill again" (see his "Letters from the East"); late in 1854 he issues another volume of his poems, this time through the Appletons, who become his publishers thenceforth.

In 1854-55 he takes an active part in forming the Republican Party; he continues his support of the Kansas Free Soil movement, and supports Fremont in the campaign of 1856; he starts, with his wife, on a fifth voyage to Europe, May 7, 1857, hoping thus to improve her health; they visit Paris, Heidelberg, southern France, and Spain, where Bryant meets Emilio Castelar; on reaching Naples he is detained four months by Mrs. Bryant's illness; while there he reads much Italian literature, and writes "The Sick Bed," "The River by Night," "The Life that Is," and "A Day Dream;" he revisits Rome, and there first familiarly meets Hawthorne; he meets him again at Florence at the home of the Brownings, where both were guests; he meets Landor also at Florence, and later renews at Paris his intimate acquaintance with the Brownings; while in Paris he declines a proffered appointment as one of the Regents of the University of the State of New York; he returns to this country September 9, 1858,

with Mrs. Bryant improved in health ; during the summer of 1859 he foresees the seriousness of the impending war, and predicts the erection of a monument to John Brown within ten years ; he presides on the occasion of Lincoln's first speech in New York, and afterward supports him as a nominee for the presidency ; during 1859, saddened by the loss of several friends, he writes " The Cloud on the Way," " Waiting by the Gate," " The New and Old," and " The Third of November ;" during 1860, impressed by the deaths of Humboldt, Macaulay, Irving, Prescott, De Quincey, and others, he writes " The Constellations ;" April 3, 1860, he delivers a eulogy on Irving, at the request of the New York Historical Society, and is followed by Edward Everett ; he is made a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1861 ; in the autumn of 1860 he visits friends in western Maryland, where he finds Lincoln flags flying ; during the summer of 1860 he supports Lincoln against Seward for the presidential nomination, and writes to Lincoln after the nomination, urging him to " make no speeches, . . . enter into no pledges," etc. ; after Lincoln's election he strongly urges the selection of Chase as Secretary of State ; he also approves of Welles and opposes Cameron as members of the Cabinet ; he has an interview with Lincoln on his way to his inaugural ; he vigorously opposes the ideas of compromise suggested after the first battle of Bull Run ; early during the Civil War he writes " Not Yet," a poem addressed to Southern sympathizers in Europe, and " Our Country's Call," which greatly aided Lincoln in his appeal for recruits.

Early in 1861 Bryant expresses himself in favor of emancipation, and presides at a New York emancipation meeting addressed by Owen Lovejoy ; he approves Fremont's proclamation of freedom in August, 1861 ; he becomes an intimate counsellor of Secretary Chase, and strongly opposes the issue of " greenbacks," urging instead a uniform banking system, based on government securities and a system of direct taxa-

tion, and clearly foretelling the evil that has since resulted from the "greenback" issue; he also remonstrates with Lincoln, vehemently urging him not to sign the bill to issue the United States legal tender notes; he also remonstrates against the tardiness of McClellan; in a personal visit to Lincoln, at Washington, in August, 1862, he opposes the idea of centralizing our troops against Richmond; during the winter of 1862-63 he seeks relief from the horrors of war by writing his fairy poems, "Sela," "The Little People of the Snow," and an incomplete poem entitled "A Tale of Cloudland;" in July, 1863, he aids in defending the *Evening Post* building during the "draft riots;" later in the same winter he writes "The Poet" and "The Path," and begins, at first in a fragmentary way, his great translation of Homer; he publishes his translation of the Fifth Book of the "Odyssey" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and later collects his more recent poems, including this translation and "The Rain Dream," into a volume with the title "Thirty Poems;" during 1863 he also writes "The Return of the Birds" and "My Autumn Walk;" although these poems express a love of peace, Bryant vehemently opposes the talk of compromise after Gettysburg, and as vehemently condemns any attempt to punish free speech on either side; in October, 1864, he contributes to the *Atlantic Monthly* the poem "My Autumn Walk," with the note, "Ask me for no more poetry. . . . Nobody in the years after seventy can produce anything in poetry save the thick and muddy last running of the cask from which all the clear and sprightly liquor has been already drawn;" as his views on finance and emancipation gradually prove to have been correct, Bryant and his paper become more widely popular; Godwin declares that, during the war, the income from the *Post* for a year was a considerable fortune; Bryant spends large amounts in charity and in the improvement of Roslyn, planting there every known tree and shrub that the soil and climate would permit; his seventieth birthday, November 3,

1864, is widely celebrated, and is publicly commemorated by the Century Club of New York, an organization of which Bryant had been one of the founders ; Bancroft, Bayard Taylor, Holmes, Emerson, Stoddard, Julia Ward Howe, Whittier, and many others take part, and Lowell writes for the occasion "Our Bard of Seventy-six."

Early in 1865 Bryant addresses to the soldiers of the Union Army an open letter, commending them for their work during 1864 ; about the same time he also urges strongly a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery throughout the United States ; on the death of Lincoln Bryant is strongly urged by Whittier, Holmes, and others to prepare a memoir of Lincoln, but he declines on the ground that he is too near Lincoln, in time, to write impartially ; in the summer of 1865 he declines to write a poem for the Commencement of Williams College, declaring that "youth is the time for such imprudences ;" about the same time he writes his poem entitled "The Death of Slavery," which has been called the nation's hymn of thanksgiving ; in the summer of 1865 he buys the old farm and homestead at Cummington, Mass., where he was born, and remodels it for a summer home, hoping thus to improve his wife's failing health ; he invites all his relatives from Illinois to be present at the ceremony of "hanging the pot," but Mrs. Bryant dies at Roslyn July 27, 1866, before ever taking possession of the new house ; during 1866 Bryant vigorously advocates liberal treatment of the seceding States, and insists on federal protection of the negroes in their civil rights ; visiting Cummington in October, 1866, he writes there his lines entitled "October, 1866," and soon afterward starts on his sixth trip to Europe, with his second daughter, Julia, as a companion ; about the same time he decides to seek relief from his great sorrow in completing his translation of Homer ; he buys a pocket edition of the Greek poet, and sets himself the task of forty lines a day ; he spends several weeks in southern France, Spain, and Italy, and meets Lord Lytton and Garibaldi while in

Florence ; after several months in Rome they return to Paris by way of Munich and the principal German cities, and thence through England to Roslyn September 9, 1867 ; Bryant passes most of the succeeding autumn and winter " trifling with Homer ; " he is tendered a public dinner in New York, January 30, 1868, by the Free Trade League, of which he had long been president ; he continues his translation of Homer during 1878, consulting other translations only on questions of construction ; in February, 1869, he prepares and reads before the New York Historical Society an address on Halleck, who died in 1867 ; in June, 1869, he responds to a toast at the Alumni dinner of Williams College ; during 1868-69 he writes the hymns " A Brighter Day," " Among the Trees," and " A May Evening," and collects and publishes his " Letters from the East ; " he completes his translation of the " Iliad " January 4, 1870 ; Volume I. is published February 19, and Volume II. June 15, 1870 ; while reading the proofs Bryant discovers that some lines have been omitted, and so he revises the whole work, comparing line by line with the original ; the " Iliad " proves to be a popular success ; during 1870 he assists in preparing the anthology entitled " A Library of Poetry and Song," his work consisting mainly in revising the selections made by assistant editors, rejecting several, and suggesting some poems ; he begins translating the " Odyssey " in July, 1870 ; he completes the first book of the " Odyssey " in April, 1871, and the second before the close of that year ; Volume I. of the " Odyssey " was published September 20, 1871, and Volume II. September 20, 1872 ; Bryant also makes several public addresses during 1871 ; in his later years he spends the winter in New York City, the spring and early summer at Roslyn, and the late summer at Cummington ; during most of his life he rises at half-past five, or before, in winter, and at five o'clock in summer ; he begins his day regularly with an hour or more of vigorous exercise with light dumb-bells, etc. ; while in New York he walks at least six miles a day " whatever the weather or the state of the

streets ; " he uses neither tobacco, tea, nor coffee, very little meat, and less wine.

In January, 1872, accompanied by his daughter, his brother John, and other friends, he sails for Nassau, and thence, after two weeks, to Havana, where he receives public attentions ; thence, late in February, to Mexico, where he is made a member of learned societies, and inspects many early historical records ; after several weeks in Mexico, the party return by way of Havana and New Orleans, and reach home in April, 1873 ; in the summer of 1873 he erects for his native town of Cummington a public library building, which he stocks with six thousand carefully selected volumes ; during this year he often walks eighteen miles a day about Cummington ; during the winter of 1872-73, at the request of the publisher, Mr. Putnam, he collects an edition of his orations and speeches ; with his daughter, Mrs. Godwin, he visits Florida late in the winter of 1873 ; during that year he and Longfellow are made members of the Russian Academy, Tennyson being the only other contemporary poet then holding that honor ; he speaks at Princeton College in July, 1873, and makes several public addresses during 1874 ; his eightieth birthday, November 3, 1874, is honored by many friends, especially in Chicago and New York, an elaborate silver vase commemorative of Bryant's life being presented in New York ; during 1875 he revises his *Anthology*, and undertakes a new edition of *Shakespeare*, aided by E. A. Duyckinck ; though knowing *Shakespeare's* plays almost by heart, Bryant re-reads them all and compares carefully the various editions then existing ; owing to delay with the illustrations, this work was not published during Bryant's lifetime ; early in 1875 he calls a meeting in New York to protest against the invasion of the legislature of Louisiana by the federal forces, and addresses it " with the vehemence and fire of a man of thirty ; " later he is officially entertained at Albany by his old friend Samuel J. Tilden, then recently elected Governor ; Bryant retains his power of memory—almost as marvellous as that

of Macaulay—till his latest days ; early in December, 1875, he entertains at Roslyn Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes) ; about the same time he writes " Christmas in 1875 " and " A Life-Time ; " during 1876 he writes the hymn for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, and assists in entertaining the Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil ; during 1877 he takes part in ceremonies connected with the erection of a monument to Halleck, and speaks at the Commencement exercises of La-Fayette College ; during 1878, his last year, he keeps up his long walks, speaks at many public meetings, and is more vivacious and cheerful than ever before in his life ; on May 29, 1878, he delivers, at Central Park, New York, a speech at the unveiling of a monument to Mazzini ; while speaking he exposes himself to the sun, and, soon afterward, on entering the home of an acquaintance near the Park, he falls and seriously injures his head ; he remains in a semi-conscious condition till his death, in his New York home, June 12, 1878.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

### I. Dignity — Reserve — Elevation — Serenity.—

"His general tone toward society is harsh. In his poems he continually speaks of escaping from the crowd, of despising the frivolity of society, of hating the every-day work by which man, in this life, keeps up that interesting and slightly important connection between body and soul called 'getting a living.' . . . As a poet, his nature is not broad, sensitive, and genial, but intense, serious, and deep. He appears rather to have for it [the real concrete life of the nation] a subtle and supercilious antipathy, when, as a poet, he gives himself up to the influences of nature. . . . The healing power there is in Bryant's philosophic meditation on life, the



fine avenues through which his thought penetrates to what is deepest in the soul, and the beautiful serenity he not only feels but communicates, are all well illustrated in his poem on 'The Return of Youth.' "—*E. P. Whipple.*

"His sentiment was unsentimental; he never whined nor found fault with condition or nature; he was robust, but not tyrannical; frugal, but not too severe; grave, but full of humor. . . . The delights of nature and meditations on the universality of life and death withdrew him from the study of the individual world. . . . The most fervent social passions of his song are those of friendship, of filial and fraternal love; his intellectual passion is always under restraint, even when moved by patriotism, liberty, religious faith."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,  
As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignifed,  
Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights  
With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights."  
—*Lowell.*

"This steady flow of thought and purpose, beneath a calm exterior, untossed by storm and passion, marks Bryant's poetical work from the first."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"As the patriarch went forth alone at eventide, the reveries of genius have been to Bryant holy and private seasons; they are as unstained by the passing clouds of this troubled existence, as the skies of his own 'prairies' by village smoke. . . . He has preserved the elevation which he so early acquired. He has been loyal to the Muses. At their shrine his ministry seems ever free and sacred, wholly apart from the ordinary associations of life. With a pure heart and a lofty purpose, has he hymned the glory of nature and the praise of Freedom. To this we cannot but in a great degree ascribe the serene beauty of his verse. . . . Like all human beings, the burden of daily toil sometimes weighs heavily on his soul: the noisy activity of common life becomes hopeless:

scenes of inhumanity, error, and suffering grow oppressive, or more personal causes of despondency make the grasshopper a burden. Then he turns to the quietude and beauty of nature for refreshment. . . . The elevated manner in which Bryant has uniformly presented the claims of poetry, the tranquil eloquence with which his chaste and serious muse appeals to the heart, deserve the most grateful recognition. . . . A beautiful calm, like that which rests on the noble works of the sculptor, breathes from the heart of Bryant. He traces a natural phenomenon or, in melodious numbers, the history of some familiar scene, and then, with almost prophetic emphasis, utters to the charmed ear a high lesson or a sublime truth."

—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"Bryant has never been a popular poet, in the ordinary acceptation of the word; neither is Wordsworth, to whom he has the nearest intellectual kinship. But he has ever been conspicuous, elevated beyond all temporary popularities."—*Bayard Taylor.*

"Bryant is one for whom the grosser world had no allurements; endowed with kind and gentle virtues, modest, unassuming, mild, simple, elevated in sentiment, dignified in deportment, pure in life, a worshipper of the beautiful everywhere in nature and art, perpetually attended by noble and benevolent aspirations, familiar as a friend with the best spirits of the past, but shrinking instinctively from contact with society."—*Parke Godwin.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" But wouldst thou rest  
Awhile from tumult and the frauds of men,  
These old and friendly solitudes invite  
Thy visit. They, while yet the forest trees  
Were young upon the unviolated earth,  
And yet the moss-stains on the rock were new,  
Beheld thy [Freedom's] glorious childhood, and rejoiced."

—*The Antiquity of Freedom.*

- " Ah ! 'twere a lot too blest  
 Forever in thy colored shades to stray :  
 Amid the kisses of the soft southwest  
 To move and dream for aye ;
- " And leave the vain low strife  
 That makes men mad—the tug for wealth and power—  
 The passions and the cares that wither life,  
 And waste its little hour."—*Autumn Woods.*
- " Though forced to drudge for the dregs of men  
 And scrawl strange words with the barbarous pen  
 And mingle among the jostling crowd,  
 Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud—  
 I often come to this quiet place,  
 To breathe the airs that ruffle thy face,  
 And gaze upon thee in silent dream ;  
 For in thy lonely and lovely stream  
 An image of that calm life appears  
 That won my heart in my greener years."

—*Green River.*

**2. Genuineness—Sincerity—Naturalness.**— " He is so genuine that he testifies to nothing in scenery or human life of which he has not had a direct personal consciousness. His sincerity is the severity of character and not merely the sincerity of a swift imagination, which believes while it is creating. He does not appear to have the capacity to assume various points of view, to project himself into forms of being different from his own, to follow any inspiration other than that which springs up in his own individual heart. . . . His thoughts, emotions, language, are all his own. He has earned the right to them by the contact of his mind with the object to which they relate. The power to heal, to gladden, to inspire to sublime effort, to lift the mind above all anxious cares and petty ambitions, he has tested by consciousness."—*E. P. Whipple.*

" He is not indebted to the patient study of books so much

as to calm communion with outer things. He has levied no contributions on the masters of foreign literature, nor depended upon the locked-up treasures of ancient genius for the materials of thought and expression. He has written from the movings of his own mind ; he has uttered what he has felt and known ; he has described things around him in fitting terms, terms suggested by familiar contemplation, and thus his writings have become transcripts of external nature. Mr. Bryant's one demand is for a spirit of greater independence, for less imitation of form, for a more hearty reliance upon native instinct and inspiration : in a word, for greater freedom, greater simplicity, and greater truth."—*Parke Godwin*.

"He is original because he is sincere—a true painter of the face of this country and of the sentiment of his own people."—*Emerson*.

"I particularly enjoy Bryant's poetry because I can understand it. It is probably a sign that I am somewhat behind the age, that I have but little relish for elaborate obscurity in literature of which you find it difficult to study out the meaning and are not sure you have hit upon it at last. The truly beautiful and sublime is always simple and natural and marked by a certain unconsciousness of effort. This is Mr. Bryant's poetry."—*Edward Everett*.

"Does any memory, however searching or censorious, recall one line that he wrote which was not honest and pure, one measure that he defended except from the profoundest conviction of its usefulness to the country, one cause that he advocated which any friend of liberty, of humanity, or of good government would deplore?"—*George William Curtis*.

"He is not only a poet but a poet whose utterances have been singularly free from the varying fashions of his day. He is wholly without mannerism. His art never aims at being effectual and thus never betrays itself. Simplicity, nobility, and a plainness which rivals prose without being itself prosaic, are the characteristics of Mr. Bryant's style. He is an illus-

trious example of the youth of that highest poetic art, which does not spring from youthful ferment of the blood, or the motions of a keen enthusiastic sentiment which is dulled by time, but which is woven into the whole moral and intellectual being of the poet—is born with him and cannot be lost while he lives.”—*Bayard Taylor*.

“Bryant thought that verses that were obscure were not poetry. His constitutional aversion to sham of all kinds no doubt had its share in begetting this aversion. He would as soon have invoked the aid of a brass band to secure his audience as to lend himself to any meretricious devices for extorting admiration. Such he regarded all surprising novelties of expression and all subtleties of thought which the common apprehension does not readily accept. He felt that no poem was fit to leave his hand if a word or a line in it betrayed affectation or required study to be understood.” — *John Bigelow*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“On the breast of earth  
I lie and listen to her mighty voice—  
A voice of many tones—sent up from streams  
That wander through the gloom from woods unseen,  
Swayed by the sweeping of the tides of air;  
From rocky chasms where darkness dwells all day,  
And hollows of the great invisible hills,  
And sands that edge the ocean, stretching far  
Into the night—a melancholy sound.”—*Earth*.

“Oft, in the sunless April day,  
Thy early smile has stayed my walk;  
But midst the gorgeous blooms of May,  
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

“So they who climb to wealth forget  
The friends in darker fortunes tried.  
I copied them—but I regret  
That I should ape the ways of pride.

“ And when again the genial hour  
 Awakes the painted tribes of light,  
 I'll not o'erlook the modest flower  
 That makes the woods of April bright.”

—*The Yellow Violet.*

“ I stand upon their ashes in thy beam,  
 The offspring of another race, I stand  
 Beside a stream they loved, this valley-stream ;  
 And where the night-fire of the quivered band  
 Showed the gray oak by fits, and war-song rung,  
 I teach the quiet shades the strains of this new tongue.”

—*A Walk at Sunset.*

✓ 3. Sensibility to Nature.—“ Bryant is not merely a worshipper at her shrine [Nature's] but a priest of her mysteries and an interpreter of her symbolical language to men. And it is not merely the external forms but the internal spirit with which he has communed. He sees and hears with his soul as well as with his eye and ear. Nature to him is alive, and her life has coursed through the finest veins and passed into the inmost recesses of his moral being. He is, perhaps, unequalled among our American poets in his grasp of the elemental life of Nature. His descriptions of natural scenery imply that nature, in every aspect it turns to the poetic eye, is thoroughly alive. It is this which compels us to mingle veneration and wonder with admiration and delight in reading his works ; it is this which gives his poems their character of depth.”—*E. P. Whipple.*

“ They transport us into the depths of the solemn primeval forest, to the shores of the lonely lake, the banks of the wild, nameless stream, or the brow of the rocky upland, rising like a promontory from amidst a wild ocean of foliage ; while they shed around us the glory of a climate fierce in its extremes. . . . Bryant, dear Nature's nursling and the priest whom she most loves, is like the bards of old ; his spirit delights in fire, air, earth, and water—the apparent structures

of the starry heavens, the mountain recesses, and the vasty deep."—*Washington Irving*.

"As to sensibility, no man ever lived more delicately susceptible to external influences. Not only is his eye open to the forms of nature, but every fibre of his being seems to be trembling alive to them: like the strings of an Æolian harp, which the faintest breath of the wind can awaken. Wordsworth has been called the apostle of nature; Bryant said to his friend Dana, on first reading Wordsworth's 'Lyrical Ballads: 'A thousand springs seemed to gush up at once into my heart, and the face of Nature changed of a sudden into a strange freshness and life.' Nature, indeed, was winning him completely to herself, and one of the first-fruits of her caresses was the 'Yellow Violet.' 'A Fragment,' now known as 'An Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood,' is due to the same feeling. Composed in a noble old forest that fronted his father's dwelling, it is an exquisite picture of the calm contentment he found in the woods. Every object—the green leaves, the thick roof, the mossy rocks, the cleft-born wind-flowers, the dancing insects, the squirrel with raised paws, the ponderous trunks, black roots, and sunken brooks—is painted with the minutest fidelity and yet with an almost impassioned sympathy. . . . His principal theme is Nature, which he treats as one whose mission it was to show an uncongenial world what beauty lay concealed in our vast, uncouth, almost savage wilds of woods and fields."—*Parke Godwin*.

"Thank God! his hand on nature's keys,

Its cunning keeps at life's full span."—*Whittier*.

"What Nature said to him was plainly spoken and clearly heard and perfectly repeated. Let him more and more give human voice to woods and waters, and in acting as the accepted interpreter of Nature, let him speak fearlessly to the heart as to the eye. The primeval woods, God's first temples, breathe the solemn benediction of his verse."—*George William Curtis*.

“ Then came a woman in the night,  
When winds were whist, and moonlight smiled,  
Where in his mother's arms, who slept,  
There lay a new-born child.

“ She gazed at him with loving looks,  
And while her hand upon his head  
She laid in blessing and in power,  
In slow, deep words she said :

“ ‘ This child is mine. Of all my sons  
Are none like what the lad shall be,  
Though these are wise, and those are strong,  
And all are dear to me.

“ ‘ The elder sisters of my race  
Shall taunt no more that I am dumb ;  
Hereafter I shall sing through him,  
In ages yet to come ! ’

“ She stooped and kissed his baby mouth,  
Whence came a breath of melody,  
As from the closed leaves of a rose  
The murmur of a bee !

“ Thus did she consecrate the child,  
His more than mother from that hour,  
Albeit at first he knew her not,  
Nor guessed his sleeping power.”

—*R. H. Stoddard.*

“ I shall never forget with what feeling my friend Bryant, some years ago, described to me the effect produced upon him by his meeting for the first time Wordsworth's Ballads. . . . He had felt the sympathetic truth from an acceding mind, and you see how instantly his powers and affections shot over the earth and through his kind.”—*Richard H. Dana.*

“ Mr. Bryant is best known to us as the poet who has sought his inspiration from American forests. Save Emerson,



no American poet so often and so well described the Nature familiar to the residents of the Eastern States—the Nature which has been the background of most of our literature. Bryant might have said with Addison, ‘Poetic fields encompass me around.’ Nay, more, he interprets the meaning of Nature as the mirror and teacher of the soul. His observations of skies, woods, and waters, and his power of description of the outer world, justly entitle him to his wide renown as a poet of nature.”—*C. F. Richardson.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ All the green herbs  
Are stirring in his breath ; a thousand flowers,  
By the road-side and the borders of the brook,  
Nod gayly to each other ; glossy leaves  
Are twinkling in the sun, as if the dew  
Were on them yet, and silver waters break  
Into small waves and sparkle as he comes.”

—*The Summer Wind.*

“ ‘ There in the boughs that hide the roof the mock-bird sits and  
sings,  
And there the hang-bird’s brood within its little hammock  
swings ;  
A pebbly brook, where rustling winds among the hopples  
sweep,  
Shall lull thee till the morning sun looks in upon thy sleep.’ ”

—*The Strange Lady.*

“ The rain-drops glistened on the trees around,  
Whose shadows on the tall grass were not stirred,  
Save when a shower of diamonds, to the ground  
Was shaken by the flight of startled bird ;  
For birds were warbling round, and bees were heard  
About the flowers ; the cheerful rivulet sung  
And gossiped, as he hastened ocean-ward ;  
To the gray oak the squirrel, chiding, clung,  
And chirping from the ground the grasshopper upsprung.”

—*After a Tempest.*

✓ **4. Majesty—Sublimity.**—"In his movement Bryant is the most Miltonic of American poets. No writer since the Elizabethan era has given to the world more rolling and majestic periods than has the author of 'Thanatopsis.'

"Vast as are the themes, giving scope for the boldest and broadest flights and exciting the highest sense of sublimity, they are treated with a corresponding grandeur of language and thought. Certainly it ["'Thanatopsis'"] is marked by a grandeur and profundity of thought, a breadth of treatment and an imagination, that surprises us in one of his age—only seventeen."—*Parke Godwin*.

"The grandeur of 'Thanatopsis' may be limited and imperfect, but it is still grandeur."—*C. F. Richardson*.

"The perfection of its ["'Thanatopsis's'"] rhythm, the majesty and dignity of the tone of matured reflection which breathes through it, the solemnity of its underlying sentiment, and the austere unity of the pervading thought, would deceive almost any critic into affirming it to be the product of an imaginative thinker to whom years had brought the philosophic mind."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"We have always considered his 'Antiquity of Freedom' and 'Hymn to Death' as stronger and loftier strains than 'Thanatopsis,' the charm of which lies chiefly in its grave, majestic music."—*Bayard Taylor*.

"The reverential awe of the irresistible pervades the verses entitled 'Thanatopsis' and 'A Forest Hymn,' imparting to them a sweet solemnity, which must affect all thinking hearts."—*James Grant Wilson*.

"A noble simplicity of language, combined with these traits, often leads to the most genuine sublimity of expression. Some of his lines are unsurpassed in this respect. They so quietly unfold a great thought or a magnificent image that we are often taken by surprise."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Oh, God ! when thou  
 Dost scare the world with tempests, set on fire  
 The heavens with falling thunderbolts, or fill,  
 With all the waters of the firmament  
 The swift dark whirl-wind that uproots the woods  
 And drowns the villages ; when, at thy call,  
 Uprises the great deep and throws himself  
 Upon the continent, and overwhelms  
 Its cities—who forgets not, at sight  
 Of these tremendous tokens of thy power,  
 His pride, and lays his strifes and follies by ? ”

—*A Forest Hymn.*

“ And lo ! on the wing of the heavy gales,  
 Through the boundless arch of heaven he sails ;  
 Silent and slow and terribly strong,  
 The mighty shadow is borne along,

“ Like the dark eternity to come ;  
 While the world below, dismaved and dumb,  
 Through the calm of the thick hot atmosphere  
 Looks up at its gloomy folds with fear.”

—*The Hurricane.*

“ The hills  
 Rocked-ribbed and ancient as the sun,—the vales  
 Stretching in pensive quietness between ;  
 The venerable woods—rivers that move  
 In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
 That make the meadows green ; and, poured round all,  
 Old Ocean’s gray and melancholy waste,—  
 Are but the solemn decorations all  
 Of the great tomb of man.”—*Thanatopsis.*

5. **Fulness—Suggestiveness.**—“ Another characteristic of Bryant’s poetical diction is its fulness of matter. Every line is loaded with meaning. This weight and wealth and compactness of thought sometimes fail to impress the

reader in his blank verse, on account of its swift and slipping freedom of movement; but in his singing rhyme they are forced upon the attention."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Enough is suggested to convey a strong impression, and often by the introduction of a single circumstance the mind is instantly able to complete the picture. Some elevating inference or truth is elicited from every scene consecrated by his muse."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"Certain of Bryant's pieces it is impossible to read without gliding unconsciously into a thousand trains of associated thought; a single epithet sometimes tells many a secret."—*Parke Godwin*.

"His close observation of the phenomena of nature and the graphic felicity of his details prevent his descriptions from ever becoming general and commonplace."—*Washington Irving*.

"The gravity, the dignity, the solemnity of natural devotion, were never before stated so accurately and with such significance. We stand in thought in the heart of a great forest, under its broad roof of boughs, awed by the sacred influences of the place. A gloom which is not painful settles upon us; we are surrounded by mystery and unseen energy. The shadows are full of worshippers and beautiful things that live in their misty twilights."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Then strayed the poet, in his dreams,  
By Rome's and Egypt's ancient graves;  
Went up the New World's forest streams,  
Stood in the Hindoo's temple-caves;

"Walked with the Pawnee, fierce and stark,  
The sallow Tartar, midst his herds,  
The peering Chinese, and the dark  
False Malay uttering gentle words."

—*The Death of Schiller*.

“ Ah me! what armed nations—Asian horde  
 And Lybian host—the Scythian and the Gaul—  
 Have swept your base and through your passes poured,  
 Like ocean-tides uprising at the call  
 Of tyrant winds—against your rocky side  
 The bloody billows dashed, and howled, and died! ”  
 —*To the Apennines.*

“ Then the earth shouts with gladness, and her tribes  
 Gather within their ancient bounds again.  
 Else had the mighty of the olden time,  
 Nimrod, Sesostris, or the youth who feigned  
 His birth from Lybian Ammon, smitten yet  
 The nations with a rod of iron, and driven  
 Their chariot o'er our necks.”—*Hymn to Death.*

**6. Precision—Correctness.**—“ In language, indeed, he is so great an artist that no general term can do justice to his felicity. The very atmosphere of his sentiment, the subtlest tones of his thought, the most refined modifications which feeling and reflection receive from individuality, are all transfused into his style with unobtrusive ease. . . . No melody of tone is ever introduced merely for the music ; no flush of the hues of language is ever used merely to give the expression a bright coloring, but all is characteristic, indicating the subordination of the materials to the man, the poetry to the poet. It is for this reason that Bryant is so valuable a guide to young lyrists, who are so prone to be carried away by words, and who emerge from their tangled wilderness of verbal sweets and beauties without any essential sweetness and beauty of sentiment and imagination, and become, at best, authors of poetical lines and images rather than poems. To this singular purity and depth of sentiment he adds a corresponding simplicity, closeness, clearness, and beauty of expression. His style is literally himself. It has the form and follows the movement of his nature, and is shaped into the exact expression of the word, sentiment, and thought out of which the poem springs.”—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Now, when expression has been carried to the extreme, it is an occasional relief to recur to the clearness, to the exact appreciation of words, discoverable in every portion of Bryant's verse and prose. It is like a return from a florid renaissance to the antique; and indeed there was something Doric in Bryant's nature. His diction, like his thought, often refreshes us as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. . . . Give his poems a study, and their simplicity is a charm. . . . Verse, to Bryant, was the outflow of his deepest emotions; a severe taste and a discreet temperament made him avoid the study of decoration."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"His art was exquisite. It was absolutely unsuspected; but it served its truest purpose, for it removed every obstruction to the full and complete delivery of his message."—*George William Curtis*.

"It seems as if his whole study had been how his thoughts might be most beautifully uttered. Not only are words not misused, which would be small praise indeed, but none occur that any process of refinement can improve."—*Parke Godwin*.

"He sees us [the flowers, etc.] where other eyes would see nothing, or at most the scenery of our great theatre—the earth.—One cannot read Mr. Bryant's poetry without wonder and admiration—wonder at the closeness of his observation and admiration of what he accomplishes by it."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Nor I alone; a thousand bosoms round  
Inhale thee in the fulness of delight;  
And languid forms rise up, and pulses bound  
Livelier, at coming of the wind of night;  
And, languishing to hear thy grateful sound,  
Lies the vast inland stretched beyond the sight.  
Go forth into the gathering shade; go forth,  
God's blessing breathed upon the fainting earth!"

—*To the Evening Wind*.

" Yet loveliest are thy setting smiles, and fair,  
 Fairest of all that earth beholds, the hues  
 That live among the clouds, and flush the air,  
 Lingering and deepening at the hour of dews.  
 Then softest gales are breathed, and softest heard  
 The plaining voice of streams and pensive note of bird.

. . . . .  
 They deemed their quivered warrior, when he died  
 Went to the bright isles beneath the setting sun ;  
 Where winds are aye at peace and skies are fair,  
 And purple-skirted clouds curtain the crimson air."

—*A Walk at Sunset.*

**7. Tenderness—Pensive Melancholy.**—In Bryant's poems a gentleness as soft as that of a woman, a tenderness mild and tearful as early love, simplicity like that of unconscious youth, are joined to the lofty philosophy of a sage. Innumerable are the passages that touch our best feelings, sinking quietly into the heart and melting it, like a strain of music, into liquid joy and love."—*Parke Godwin.*

" He has the gift of shedding over them [his descriptions] a pensive grace that blends them all into harmony and of clothing them with moral associations that make them speak to the heart."—*Washington Irving.*

" The chief charm of Bryant's poetry consists in a tender pensiveness, a moral melancholy, breathing over all his contemplations, dreams, and reveries, even such as are in the main glad, and giving assurance of a pure spirit, benevolent to all living creatures, and habitually pious in the felt omnipresence of the Creator. It overflows with what Wordsworth calls the religion of the Gods. The reverential awe of the irresistible pervades the verses entitled 'Thanatopsis' and 'A Forest Hymn,' imparting to them a sweet solemnity which must affect all thinking hearts."—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

" I linger upon it ["Thanatopsis"] because it was the first adequate voice of the New England spirit ; and in the grandeur of the hills, in the heroic Puritan tradition of sacrifice

and endurance in the daily life, saddened by imperious and awful theologic dogma, in the hard circumstance of the pioneer household, the contest with the wilderness, the grim legends of Indians and the war, have we not some natural clue to the strain of 'Thanatopsis,' the depthless and entrancing sadness, as of inexorable fate, that murmurs, like the autumn wind through the forest, in the melancholy cadences of the 'Hymn to Death?'—*George William Curtis.*

"Wayward beauty or tender suggestiveness is not absent, but each is subordinated to the solemn reflections inspired by the scenes in which we live."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"The still, sad music of humanity was ever sounding in his ears, moaning like the wind of the forest. . . . This large, far-reaching sympathy with his fellow-creatures is a marked characteristic of Bryant's poetry, and distinguishes it from that of every other American poet, living or dead."—*R. H. Stoddard.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Let me move slowly through the street,  
Filled with an ever-shifting train,  
Amid the sound of steps that beat  
The murmuring walks like autumn rain.

"How fast the flitting figures come!  
The mild, the fierce, the stony face;  
Some bright with thoughtless smiles, and some  
Where secret tears have left their trace.

"They pass—to toil, to strife, to rest;  
To halls in which the feast is spread;  
To chambers where the funeral guest  
In silence sits beside the dead."

—*The Crowded Street.*

"Thou changest not—but I am changed  
Since first thy pleasant banks I ranged;  
And the grave stranger, come to see  
The play-place of his infancy,



Has scarce a single trace of him  
Who sported once upon thy brim.  
The visions of my youth are past—  
Too bright, too beautiful to last.”—*The Rivulet.*

“ Yet there are pangs of keener woe,  
Of which the sufferers never speak,  
Nor to the world’s cold pity show  
The tears that scald the cheek,  
Wrung from their eyelids by the shame  
And guilt of those they shrink to name,  
Whom once they loved with cheerful will,  
And love, though fallen and branded, still.”  
—*The Living Lost.*

**8. Nationality—Patriotism.**—“ His poems are strictly American. They are American in their subjects, imagery, and spirit. Scarcely any other than one born in this country can appreciate all their merit, so strongly marked are they by the peculiarities of our natural scenery, our social feelings, and our natural convictions. . . . Nor is the tone of these poems less American than the imagery of the themes. They breathe the spirit of that new order of things in which we are cast. They are fresh like a young people unwarped by the superstitions and prejudices of the age; free like a nation scorning the thought of bondage; generous like a society whose only protection is mutual sympathy; and bold and vigorous, like a land pressing onward to a future of glorious enlargement. The noble instincts of democracy prompt and animate every strain. An attachment to liberty stronger than the desire for life, an immovable regard for human rights, a confidence in humanity that admits of no misgivings, and a rejoicing hope of the future, full of illumination and peace, these are the sentiments that they everywhere inspire.”—*Parke Godwin.*

“ Bryant, for half a century, with conscience and knowledge, with power and unquailing courage, did his part in

holding the hand and heart of his country true to her now glorious ideal. . . . The last stanza of this poem ["The Ages"] breathes in majestic music that pure passion for America and that strong and sublime faith in her destiny, which constantly appears in his verse and never wavered in his heart."—*George William Curtis.*

"Bryant's poems are valuable not only for their intrinsic excellence but for the vast influence their wide circulation is calculated to exercise on national feelings and manners."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"The feeling with which he looks upon the wonders of creation is remarkably appropriate to the scenery of the New World. His poems convey, to an extraordinary degree, the actual impression which is awakened by our lakes, mountains, and forests. . . . We esteem it one of Bryant's great merits that he has not only faithfully pictured the beauties but caught the very spirit of our scenery. His best poems have an anthem-like cadence, which accords with the vast scenes they celebrate. . . . No English park, formalized by the hand of Art, no legendary spot like the pine grove of Ravenna, surrounds us. It is not the gloomy German forest, with its phantoms and banditti, but one of those primeval dense woodlands of America. . . . Any reader of Bryant on the other side of the ocean, gifted with a small degree of sensibility and imagination, may derive from his poems the very awe and delight with which the first view of one of our majestic forests would strike the mind."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"The British public has already expressed its delight at the graphic descriptions of American scenery and wild woodland characters contained in the works of our national novelist Cooper. The same keen eye and just feeling for nature, the same indigenous style of thinking and local peculiarity of imagery, which give such novelty and interest to the pages of that gifted writer, will be found to characterize this volume

[Bryant's poems], condensed into a narrow compass and sublimated into poetry."—*Washington Irving*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" There's freedom at thy gates and rest  
For Earth's down-trodden and opprest ;  
A shelter for the hunted head,  
For the starved laborer toil and bread.  
Power, at thy bounds,  
Stops and calls back his baffled hounds."  
—*Oh Mother of a Mighty Race*.

" But thou, my country, thou shalt never fall,  
Save with thy children—thy maternal care,  
Thy lavish love, thy blessings showered on all—  
These are thy fetters—seas and stormy air  
Are the wide barrier of thy borders, where,  
Among thy gallant sons who guard thee well,  
Thou laugh'st at enemies : who shall then declare  
The date of thy deep-founded strength, or tell  
How happy, in thy lap, the sons of men shall dwell ?"  
—*The Ages*.

" These are the gardens of the desert, these  
The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,  
For which the speech of England has no name—  
The Prairies. I behold them for the first,  
And my heart swells, while the dilated sight  
Takes in the encircling vastness."—*The Prairies*.

**9. Melody—Harmony.**—" The cadences in 'The Ages' cannot be surpassed. There are comparatively few consonants. Liquids and the softer vowels abound, and the partial line after the pause at 'surge,' with the stately march of the succeeding Alexandrine, is one of the finest conceivable finales."—*Edgar Allan Poe*.

"How can we praise the verse whose music flows  
With solemn cadence and majestic close,  
Pure as the dew that filters through the rose."

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

"The very rhythm of the stanzas 'To a Waterfowl' gives the impression of its flight. Like the bird's sweeping wing, they float with a calm and majestic cadence to the ear."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"There is an occasional quaint grace of expression, as in

'Nurse of full streams and lifter up of proud  
Sky-mingling mountains that o'erlook the cloud,'

or an antithetical and rhythmical force combined, as in

'The shock that hurled  
To dust, in many fragments,  
The throne whose roots were in another world  
And whose far-stretching shadow awed our own.'"

—*Bayard Taylor.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Woo her when, with rosy blush,  
Summer eve is sinking ;  
When, on rills that softly gush,  
Stars are softly winking ;  
When through bows that knit the bower  
Moonlight gleams are stealing ;  
Woo her till the gentler hour  
Wake a gentler feeling."—*Song.*

"Where olive leaves were twinkling in every wind that blew,  
There sat beneath the pleasant shade a damsel of Peru.  
Betwixt the slender boughs, as they opened to the air,  
Came glimpses of her ivory neck and of her glossy hair."

—*The Damsel of Peru.*

"When breezes are soft and skies are fair,  
I steal an hour from study and care,  
And hie me away to the woodland scene,  
Where wanders the stream with waters of green,

As if the bright fringe of herbs on its brink,  
 Had given their stain to the wave they drink ;  
 And they whose meadows it murmurs through  
 Have named the stream from its own fair hue."

—*Green River.*

✓ **10. Calm Trust in Providence.**—"The great principle of Bryant's faith is that 'Eternal love doth keep in his complacent arms the earth, the air, the deep.' To set forth in strains the most attractive and lofty this glorious sentiment is the constant aim of his poetry."—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"He says in a letter that he felt as he walked up the hills very forlorn and desolate indeed, not knowing what was going to become of him in the big world, which grew bigger as he ascended and darker with the coming on of night. The sun had already set, leaving behind it one of those brilliant seas of chrysolite and opal which often flood the New England skies ; and while he was looking upon the rosy splendor with rapt admiration, a solitary bird made its way along the illuminated horizon. He watched the lone wanderer until it was lost in the distance, asking himself whither it had come and to what far home it was flying. When he went to the house where he was to stop for the night, his mind was still full of what he had seen and felt, and he wrote those lines, as imperishable as our own language, 'The Waterfowl.' The solemn tone in which they conclude, and which by some critics has been thought too moralizing, was as much a part of the scene as the flight of the bird itself, which spoke not alone to his eye but to his soul. To have omitted that grand expression of faith and hope in a divine guidance would have been to violate the entire truth of the vision."—*Parke Godwin.*

"This philosophy of life is a serious one ; but it admits of consolation and cheerfulness. It is dreary in Byron ; it is awful in Ecclesiastes ; but it is neither in Bryant."—*R. H. Stoddard.*

"There is no repining, no attempt to shield his self-love

by holding Providence responsible for his hardships ; still less do we find there any signs of surrender or of despair, but the same pious trust in the Divine guidance which a dozen years before had sustained him in another crisis in his career and which found such lofty expressions in the lines 'To a Waterfowl.' His inspiration was always from above. In the flower, in the stream, in the tempest, in the rainbow, in the snow, in everything about him, nature was always telling him something new of the goodness of God and forming excuses for the frail and erring."—*John Bigelow.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone  
Will lead my steps aright."—*To a Waterfowl.*

"Oh, no ! a thousand cheerful omens give  
Hope of yet happier days, whose dawn is nigh.  
He who has trained the elements shall not live  
The slave of his own passions ; he whose eye  
Unwinds the eternal dances of the sky,  
And in the abyss of brightness dares to span  
The sun's broad circle, rising yet more high,  
In God's magnificent works his will shall scan—  
And love and peace shall make their paradise with man."  
—*The Ages.*

"And when the hour of rest  
Comes, like a calm upon the mid-sea brine,  
Hushing its billowy breast—  
The quiet of that moment too is thine ;  
It breathes of Him who keeps  
The vast and helpless city while it sleeps."

—*Hymn of the City.*

**II. Profound Meditation.**—"The chief of our poets of meditation, based upon observation, are Bryant and Emerson."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"With his inimitable pictures there is ever blended high speculation or a reflective strain of moral comment."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"No boy, no young man, has ever understood his [Wordsworth's] serene and lofty genius. He touches, he moves no man, until years have brought the philosophic mind. It comes to some early, to some late, to some not at all. It came to Bryant early, and it never left him. 'Thanatopsis' struck the keynote of his genius, disclosed to him the growth and grandeur of his powers, and placed him for what he was, before all American poets, past, present, and to come."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

"But they [his juvenile efforts] do not as poetry bear witness to the real bent of his genius, or even foreshadow the characteristics of his later writings—that minute and loving observation of nature which became with him almost a religion—or that profound meditative interpretation of the great movements of the universe which amounted to a kind of philosophy."—*Parke Godwin*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Be it ours to meditate,  
In these calm shades, thy milder majesty,  
And to the beautiful order of thy works  
Learn to confirm the order of our lives."

—*A Forest Hymn*.

"Stainless worth,  
Such as the sternest age of virtue saw,  
Ripens, meanwhile, till time shall call it forth  
From the low modest shade, to light and bless the earth."

—*The Ages*.

"I would make  
Reason my guide, but she should sometimes sit  
Patiently by the way-side, while I traced  
The mazes of the pleasant wilderness  
Around me. She should be my counsellor,

But not my tyrant. For the spirit needs  
 Impulses from a deeper source than hers ;  
 And there are motions in the mind of man  
 That she must look upon with awe."

— *The Conjunction of Jupiter and Venus.*

**12. Fondness for Apostrophe.**—As a direct corollary or sequence of Bryant's elevation and high philosophy, we find him continually indulging in apostrophe. In less dignified hands, so frequent a use of this figure would become a blemish ; but it seems entirely in accord with the spirit of the man and of his poems.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" But ye, who for the living lost  
 That agony in secret bear,  
 Who shall with soothing words accost  
 The strength of your despair ? "

— *The Living Lost.*

" Thou dost mark them flushed with hope,  
 As on the threshold of their vast designs  
 Doubtful and loose they stand, and strik'st them down."

— *Hymn to Death.*

" Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
 Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet on my heart  
 Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
 And shall not soon depart."— *To a Waterfowl.*



## LOWELL, 1819-1891

**Biographical Outline.**—James Russell Lowell, born at Cambridge, Mass., February 22, 1819; father a Congregational minister, and both parents of English descent; in 1827 Lowell enters the school of William Wells, near "Elmwood," as Lowell's home was called; he enters Harvard College as a Freshman in 1834, and forms there an intimate friendship with George B. Loring; he is only a fair student, but evinces an early love for literature, especially poetry; he becomes secretary of the "Hasty Pudding Club," whose records were then kept in verse; he is suspended for several months during his Senior year for neglect of studies; he passes the interval studying under a tutor at Concord, where he meets Emerson and Thoreau; he writes the poem for Class Day in 1838 (a satire on the Abolitionists and the Concord Transcendentalists), but is not allowed to read it because of his suspension, then in effect, but it is printed in pamphlet form for the class; Lowell passes his final examinations and takes A.B. with his classmates in June, 1838.

At first he thinks seriously of entering the ministry and then takes up the law; by October, 1838, he is reading Blackstone "with as good a grace and as few wry faces as I may;" he plans a dramatic poem on Cromwell, and regrets "being compelled to say farewell to the muses;" in 1839 he writes, "I am schooling myself and shaping my theory of poetry;" during 1839 he writes verses ("pottery") for the *Boston Post* and for the *Advertiser*; in December, 1839, he meets Miss Maria White, who "knows more poetry than any one I am acquainted with;" he receives LL.B. from the Harvard Law School in the summer of 1840, and takes up the law more seri-

ously because of his father's heavy financial losses at that time and because of his engagement to Miss White in the autumn of 1840; during 1839-40 he contributes verses to the *Knickerbocker Magazine* and to the *Southern Literary Messenger* under his own name and under the pseudonym of "Hugh Percival;" he publishes early in 1841 a collection of his poems entitled "A Year's Life," which wins some recognition; he spends the winter of 1842-43 in New York, undergoing treatment by an oculist, and makes valuable acquaintances, including Page, the artist, and Briggs, the "Henry Franca" of the "Fable for Critics;" during 1841-42 he begins his life-long effort to secure international copyright, and contributes poetry to the Boston *Miscellany*, *Graham's Magazine*, and the *Democratic Review*, receiving from ten to thirty dollars for each poem; in June, 1843, he writes to Loring: "I am more and more assured every day that I shall yet do something that will keep my name (and perhaps my body) alive. My wings were never so strong as now. So hurrah for a niche and a laurel!"

He publishes his second volume of poems in December, 1843, and resolves to devote himself to literature rather than law; during 1844 he publishes "Conversations on Some of the Older Poets" (not since republished), and marries Maria White, another poet, in December of that year; they spend the winter in Philadelphia, where Lowell, doubtless influenced by his wife's strong abolitionist sentiments, becomes a contributor to the *Freeman*, an anti-slavery paper; he returns to Cambridge in June, 1845; in 1846 becomes a regular contributor to the *Anti-Slavery Standard* at a salary of \$500 a year for a weekly contribution in prose or verse; he continues this connection till the spring of 1850, contributing many of the "Biglow Papers" and his poems on "Garrison," "Freedom," "Eurydice," "The Parting of the Ways," "Beaver Brook," and "The First Snowfall," the latter in memory of his first child, Blanche, who died in March, 1847,

aged fifteen months; during 1848 he collects and publishes the first series of "Biglow Papers," publishes "A Fable for Critics" (anonymously), and contributes "Sir Launfal" to the *North American Review*; the entire first edition of the "Biglow Papers" is sold within a week after publication; during the winter of 1849-50 he publishes a collective edition of his poems, entertains Frederika Bremer, and loses his second child, Rose, then three years old, concerning whom he writes "After the Burial" (first published in 1869); he sails for Italy in July, 1851, hoping thus to improve his wife's failing health, and selling a part of his patrimony for the expenses of the journey; he severs his connection with the *Anti-Slavery Standard* in April, 1850, saying: "It has never been a matter of dollars and cents between us, for I might have earned much more in other ways. . . . For every poem which has been printed in the *Standard* I could have got four times the money paid me by the committee [controlling the *Standard*];" he loses his only son, then in his second year, at Rome in the spring of 1852, and returns to America in the following autumn; he writes little during his first foreign tour, saying, "I have been observing;" he contributes, in September, 1853, his "Moosehead Journal" to *Putnam's Magazine*, in which are also published about that time several of Mrs. Lowell's poems; his wife dies in October, 1853, leaving him one child, a daughter; Lowell writes, "I understand now what is meant by 'the waters have gone over me;'" he spends the summer of 1854 at Beverly, Mass.; he prepares a series of lectures on the English poets during the autumn, and delivers the same at the Lowell Institute, in Boston, during the following winter, thus winning his spurs as a critic.

In January, 1855, he is offered the chair of French and Spanish Literature at Harvard ("at a salary that will make me independent"), thus succeeding Ticknor and Longfellow; he contributes "Cambridge Twenty Years Ago" to *Putnam's Magazine* in January, 1854, and "Pictures from Appledore"

to the *Crayon* for December, 1854; he accepts the Harvard chair on condition of being allowed a year in Europe for preparation; he lectures in Wisconsin and other central Western States early in the spring of 1855, "going home with \$600 in my pocket;" he publishes "*Invita Minerva*" in the *Crayon* for May, 1855, and sails for Paris in June; he meets Leigh Hunt and Lowell's friend Story, the sculptor, in London, where Thackeray gives a dinner in Lowell's honor at the Garrick Club; to Germany early in the autumn of 1855, stopping at Bruges, Antwerp, and the Hague, and settling at Dresden to study the German language and literature; he remains at Dresden, "working like a dog—no, a pig," passing a wretched winter, "out of health and out of spirits;" in March, 1856, he starts for Italy, and visits Bologna, Parma, Verona, Modena, Florence, and Naples; he recovers his health, and returns to Dresden in June, 1856; to Paris in July and back to America early in the autumn, to take up the duties of his professorship, which he held for seventeen years thereafter; he gives up his home at Elmwood temporarily and goes to reside with his brother-in-law, Dr. Howe, in Cambridge; he gives two courses of lectures each year at Harvard; in the summer of 1857 he marries Miss Frances Dunlap, and in the following autumn becomes editor of the then newly established *Atlantic Monthly*; he lectures in New York City in February, 1857; during 1858 he writes that he is "working often fifteen hours a day;" in 1859 he begins a correspondence with Thomas Hughes; he returns to Elmwood in the spring of 1861, and during the same year writes "The Washers of the Shroud;" he begins the second series of "Biglow Papers," and resigns the editorship of the *Atlantic* in May, 1861; he gives up the "Biglow Papers" in June, 1862, saying, "It's no use . . . my brain must lie fallow a while."

Early in 1864 he becomes joint editor of the *North American Review* with Professor C. E. Norton; he edits a volume of "Old Dramatists" in August, 1864; in July, 1865, he writes

and reads at the Harvard memorial exercises his "Commemoration Ode"—"so rapt with the fervor of conception as I have not been these ten years;" but, a little later, he is "ashamed at having been again tempted into thinking that I could write poetry, a delusion from which I have been tolerably free these dozen years;" he continues his studies in German literature in 1865, but chafes at the drudgery of his professorship, saying, "If I can sell some of my land and slip my neck out of this collar again, I shall be a man. . . . My professorship is wearing me out;" concerning his financial receipts from his magazine articles, he writes in December, 1865, "For some years I have had twice fifty dollars for whatever I write and three or four times fifty for a long poem;" he becomes a contributor to the *Nation* in 1866, and begins a correspondence with Leslie Stephen; he prints his last "Biglow Paper" in the *Atlantic* for May, 1866, and publishes during that year a complete series of the "Biglow Papers" with a long introduction on "Yankeeisms" ("getting \$820 for my last six weeks' work"); he writes "The Nightingale in the Study" in 1867, and continues his "annual dissatisfaction" of lecturing at Harvard; in October, 1868, he publishes a new volume of old poems entitled "Under the Willows;" during the summer of 1869 he writes his long poem "The Cathedral" (published in the *Atlantic* for January, 1870); in the winter of 1870 he visits Washington, stopping to lecture at Baltimore; during the summer of 1870 he studies old French metrical romances, averaging twelve hours a day, and writes, "I long to give myself to poetry again before I get so old that I have only strength and no music left;" he entertains Thomas Hughes at Elmwood in the autumn; in July, 1871, he sells "my birthright [part of the land at Elmwood] for a mess of pottage," and writes to Leslie Stephen, "It will give me about \$5,000 a year, and Mabel [his daughter] about \$400 more;" he retains the Elmwood house with two acres; he publishes "Among My Books" in 1870 and "My Study

Windows" in 1871; he resigns the Harvard professorship in 1872, writing to Miss Norton, "It takes a good while to slough off the effect of seventeen years of pedagogy;" he publishes his essay on Dante, and sails for Europe the third time in 1872; he lands at Queenstown, and visits Dublin and Chester *en route* to London; thence to Paris ("picking up books here and there"), where he meets Emerson; in June, 1873, he receives D.C.L. from Oxford, and leaves Paris, making a tour of Belgium, Holland, and Germany, and reaching Venice in October; thence to Florence; at Rome, in January and February, 1874, and to Naples in March; while at Rome he writes his "Elysian Argosy" (published in the *Atlantic* for May, 1874); back to Paris in May, 1874, and to America in July.

During 1875 he publishes in the *Atlantic* his essay on Spenser and his Centennial Ode, "Under the Old Elm," and in book form the second series of "Among My Books," containing the essays on Dante, Spenser, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats; he lectures again at Harvard, and writes for the *Nation* two poems entitled "The World's Fair, 1876," and "*Tempora mutantur*," both of which excite some popular condemnation; he becomes actively interested in political reform in April, 1876, and is made, successively, a delegate to the State and national conventions—the latter at Cincinnati, where Hayes was nominated; he writes his "Ode for the Fourth of July, 1876," read at the Philadelphia Centennial Celebration; he declines repeated popular invitations to run for Congress, is made a Presidential elector, and continues lecturing at Harvard in the autumn of 1876; he visits Washington in February, 1877, stopping at Baltimore to give a course of lectures at Johns Hopkins University; he is offered by President Hayes the embassy to Austria and afterward that to Germany, but declines both.

In June, 1877, he is appointed Minister to Spain, and sails thither in July, visiting Paris and London *en route* and reach-

ing Madrid in August ; he finds his ministerial duties unexpectedly heavy, and suffers from the gout (as he had suffered for years) ; he visits Seville, Cordova, and Granada during the winter of 1877-78 ; in the spring of 1878 he makes a two months' tour through Southern France, Italy, and Greece, returning to Madrid in July ; he entertains General Grant there in October ; on January 19, 1870, he receives his appointment as Minister to England, and accepts on condition of a two months' interim ; in the autumn of 1881 he makes another tour through Germany and Italy, as far as Rome, returning to London in January, 1882 ; during 1884 he is elected Lord Rector of St. Andrew's, and receives a doctor's degree from the University of Edinburgh and LL.D. from Harvard ; he delivers his address on "Democracy" at Birmingham in October, 1884, and makes several other public addresses in England, about this time, winning great popularity there ; he incurs the hostility of Irish-American politicians by certain official action during 1884 ; during 1885 he loses his second wife in London, and is recalled by President Cleveland, reaching America in June ; unable to bear the associations at Elmwood, he settles at Southborough, Mass., with his daughter and her family ; he publishes "Democracy and other Addresses" in 1886, and revisits London during the summer ; he receives great public honors, visits Gladstone, and returns in the autumn ; in November, 1886, he delivers an address on the 250th anniversary of the founding of Harvard ; in 1887 he is receiving \$2,000 a year from his general copyrights ; he spends the summer of 1887 in England ; during 1888 he re-edits and publishes his poems, attends the anniversary of the University of Bologna as Harvard's representative, and spends the summer in England, at Whitby ; he is at Whitby again in 1889, returning to America in October and settling with his daughter at his old Elmwood home ; he is severely ill during the spring of 1890 ; he dies at Elmwood, August 12, 1891.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

1. **Culture—Erudition—Allusiveness.**—If Spenser is "the poet's poet," Lowell is certainly the poet of the man of

culture. While he is intelligible and delightful to the ordinary reader, his pages abound in allusions and evidences of scholarship that delight the more cultivated classes. The pleasure felt on recognizing the force of some allusion, perhaps hidden to the ordinary mind, is doubtless akin to that felt at guessing some conundrum or at being recognized in company by some eminent personage.

“Lowell was a scholar in the best sense of the word, possessing a thorough knowledge of English literature and critically conversant with other literatures as well—the classics of Greece and Rome and the classics of Spain and Italy, France and Germany. A scholar not a pedant, he mastered his learning, and it profited him in the large horizons which it disclosed to his spiritual vision and the felicity and dignity which it imparted to his style. Gentleman and scholar in all that he wrote, there is that in his writing which declares a greater intellect than it reveals. . . . He is regarded not only as a man of letters, but as a fine exemplar of culture, and of a culture so generous as to be thought supra-American. . . . We count Lowell as a specimen not of foreign but of home culture, and especially of our Eastern type. . . . Lowell’s culture has not bred in him an undue respect for polish and for established ways and forms. Precisely the opposite. Much learning and a fertile mind incline him to express minute shades of his fancy by a most iconoclastic use of words and prefixes. He is not a writer for dullards, and to read him enjoyably is a point in evidence of a liberal education. . . . A pedant quotes for the sake of a display of his learning ; Lowell, because he has mastered everything connected with his theme. . . . The fine thing about Lowell was his plentiful and original genius. This was so rich that he never was compelled, like many writers, to hoard his thoughts or be miserly with his bright sayings. When warmed by companionship and in talk he gave full play to his spontaneity, and said enough witty and

epigrammatic and poetic things to set up a dozen small talkers or writers."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"His love and mastery of books was extraordinary, and his devotion to study so relentless that in those earlier years he studied sometimes fourteen hours in the day, and pored over books until his sight seemed to desert him. . . . Probably no American student was so deeply versed in the old French romance; none knew Dante and the Italian more profoundly; German literature was familiar to him, and perhaps even Ticknor, in his own domain of Spanish lore, was not more a master than Lowell. . . . His extraordinary knowledge, whether of out-door or of in-door derivation, and the racy humor in which his knowledge was fused, overflowed his conversation. There is no historic circle of wits and scholars . . . to which Lowell's abundance would not have contributed a golden drop and his glancing wit a repartee."—*George William Curtis.*

"Few readers know what deep and rich philosophy, what fruits of thought and culture, are to be found in some of Lowell's works. . . . If our literature shall ever fade and die in the coming centuries, and some future reader shall stumble upon [his] books, he will easily and excusably wax highly enthusiastic over the unquestionable wealth of thought therein discovered. . . . He was a scholar of thorough culture in more than one field."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"The loss which America sustained in the death of Mr. Lowell in August, 1891, and of Mr. Curtis in August, 1892, was the loss of the two men who, during their generation, had most truly represented the ideals of American culture and citizenship."—*Charles Eliot Norton.*

"The poet's mind had long dealt with abstruse ideas, and was fertile in recondite allusion; he never seemed to think that even fairly read people might need a clue to his meaning. Lowell is one of the most favorable examples of American

culture. He has profited by the literatures of all nations, but he has been the disciple of no one literary master ; . . . he is eminent among scholars and capable, discreet, and distinguished among public men. . . . The best things in all tongues naturally gravitated to him ; and it is difficult for any but the most curiously learned to say whether he seemed more at home with the philosophic authors of Germany, the great poet of Italy, the immortal romancer of Spain, the brilliant wit and classic finish of the French, or with the long line of poets, chroniclers, and thinkers of our own home. . . . There is nothing in Lowell's odes obscure to a well-trained mind ; but, unfortunately, all minds are not so trained as to dissolve his thought from out the richly incrustated diction. So it remains that the stronger poems of Lowell are beyond the comprehension of all but cultivated readers. . . . Lowell's prose is like cloth-of-gold—too splendid and too cumbersome for every-day wear."—*F. H. Underwood*.

" Mr. Lowell is the last person, . . . to scorn or deny the tributaries which have washed down their many golden sands into his bright lake. . . . Lowell's poetry has simply gone on perfecting itself in form and finish till now he is as complete a specimen of ' a literary man's poet '—of the consummate artist of expression—as it would be easy to find in a summer day's hunt through a well-filled library. Around the stormy topics of war, slavery, and politics plays an incessant summer lightning of literary, antiquarian, and instructive social and domestic twitter."—*H. R. Harweis*.

At the time of Lowell's death, a writer in the *London Times* declared : " With him there passes away one of the very few Americans who were the equals of any son of the old world—of any Frenchman or any Englishman—in that indefinable mixture of qualities which we sum up, for want of a better word, under the name of culture. . . . Wherever official business was not too heavy, he invariably read for a minimum of four hours a day. This did not include the time

that he gave to ephemeral literature ; it was the time that he spent in the serious reading of books, generally old books."

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Elfish daughter of Apollo !  
Thee, from thy father stolen and bound  
To serve in Vulcan's clangorous smithy,  
Prometheus (primal Yankee) found,  
. . . . .

Then, perfidious ! having got  
Thee in the net of his devices,  
Sold thee into endless slavery,  
Made thee a drudge to boil the pot,  
Thee, Helios' daughter, who dost bear  
His likeness in thy golden hair ;  
Thee, by nature wild and wavery,  
Palpitating, evanescent  
As the shade of Dian's crescent,  
Life, motion, gladness, everywhere ! "

—*Hymn to My Fire.*

" When next upon the page I chance,  
Like Poussin's nymphs my pulses dance,  
And whirl my fancy where it sees  
Pan piping 'neath Arcadian trees,  
Whose leaves no winter-scenes rehearse,  
Still young and glad as Homer's verse.  
' What mean,' I ask, ' these sudden joys ?  
This feeling fresher than a boy's ?  
What makes this line, familiar long,  
New as the first bird's April song ? '  
I could, with sense illumined thus,  
Clear doubtful texts in Aeschylus ! "

—*The Pregnant Comment.*

" Phoebus, sitting one day in a laurel-tree's shade,  
Was reminded of Daphne, of whom it was made ;  
For the god being one day too warm in his wooing,  
She took to the tree to escape his pursuing ;

Be the cause what it might, from his offers she shrunk,  
 And, Ginevra-like, shut herself up in a trunk ;  
 And, though 't was a step into which he had driven her,  
 He somehow or other had never forgiven her ;  
 Her memory he nursed as a kind of a tonic,  
 Something bitter to chew when he'd play the Byronic,  
 And I can't count the obstinate nymphs that he brought over,  
 By a strange kind of smile he put on when he thought of her.  
 ' My case is like Dido's ' he sometimes remark'd ;  
 ' When I last saw my love, she was fairly embark'd.' "

—*A Fable for Critics.*

✓ **2. Independence — Sincerity — Manliness.**—From the beginning to the end of his career, Lowell exemplified by contrast the force of his own stirring lines :

" They are slaves who dare not be  
 In the right with two or three."

Holmes spoke of Lowell on the latter's seventieth birthday as one

" Who, born a poet, grasps his trenchant rhymes  
 And strikes unshrinking at the nation's crimes !"

" He never feared and never shrunk the obligation to be positive. Firm and liberal critic as he was, and with nothing of party spirit in his utterance save in the sense that his sincerity was his party, his mind had little affinity with super-fine estimates and shades and tints of opinion : when he felt at all he felt altogether."—*Henry James.*

" His patriotic distinction, and his ennobling influence upon the character and lives of generous American youth, gave him power to speak with more authority than any living American for the intellect and conscience of America. . . . As he allowed no church or sect to dictate his religious views or to control his daily conduct, so he permitted no party to direct his political action. He was a Whig, an Abolitionist,

a Republican, a Democrat, according to his conception of the public exigency."—*George William Curtis*.

"The war poems were thrilling, concentrating the profound emotions of a nation. There was so noble a fervor in them, and all were so distinctively elevated in tone, as to challenge for the America from which they sprang a greater affection and reverence than many in this country had been previously wont to pay her. . . . Although Mr. Lowell was in antagonism with the feeling of the majority of his countrymen upon these matters [the invasion of Mexico and the Slavery Question], he did not flinch from what he deemed to be his duty, but lashed out against the popular notions with vigor. He had the courage to be in the right when it was not so easy as it is now."—*G. B. Smith*.

"Lowell always produced the impression that he was in himself greater than anything he had done, and those who listened to him looked for a crescendo in his career. . . . ["The Present Crisis" and other poems] gave hope for uplifting the lowly by active sympathy; they rebuked the jarring sects with parables of mutual forbearance and Christian love. . . . In Lowell's verses there was something of Wordsworth's simplicity, something of Tennyson's sweetness and musical flow, and something more of the manly earnestness of the Elizabethan poets."—*F. H. Underwood*.

"The sort of high thinking and plain speaking which did more than anything else to remedy this state of things [Slavery] and to blow the liberation spark into a second flame, is to be found in [his] . . . utterance. . . . Never did any man trust himself more unreservedly to the guidance of a 'blazing principle.' . . . Behind the mark is a man terribly in earnest—but not over a crotchet—over a passion which he knows sleeps in the heart of all, and must be aroused—the love of freedom."—*H. R. Haweis*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Men ! whose boast it is that ye  
 Come of fathers brave and free,  
 If there 'breathe on earth a slave,  
 Are ye truly free and brave ?  
 . . . . .  
 They are slaves who fear to speak  
 For the fallen and the weak ;  
 They are slaves who will not choose  
 Hatred, scoffing, and abuse  
 Rather than in silence shrink  
 From the truth they needs must think.”

—*Stanzas on Freedom.*

“ Then to side with truth is noble when we share her wretched  
 crust,  
 Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be  
 just ;  
 Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands  
 aside,  
 Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,  
 And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.”

—*The Present Crisis.*

“ I do not fear to follow out the truth,  
 Albeit along the precipice's edge.  
 Let us speak plain ; there is more force in names  
 Than most men dream of ; and a lie may keep  
 Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk  
 Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name.”

—*A Glance Behind the Curtain.*

✓ 3. Didacticism.—In his “ Fable for Critics,” Lowell  
 says justly of himself :

“ There's Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb  
 With a whole bale of isms tied together with rhyme,  
 . . . . .  
 The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching  
 Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching.”



"Lowell's 'progressive' verse often was fuller of opinion than beauty, of eloquence than passion. . . . The thought, the purpose—these are the main ends with Lowell, though prose or metre suffer for it. . . . His doctrines and reflections, in the midst of an ethereal distillation, at times act like the single drop of prose which, as he reports a saying of Landor to Wordsworth, precipitates the whole. . . . If Whittier and Lowell, like the Lake Poets before them, became didactic through moral earnestness, it none the less aided to inspire them. Their verses advanced a great cause, and, as the years went by, grew in quality—perhaps as surely as that of poets who, in youth, reject all but artistic considerations."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Song, satire, and parable—more and more as he lives and ponders and pours forth—are all so many pulpit illustrations or platform pleas."—*H. R. Haweis*.

"The primary quality of Lowell's intellect, so far as one is able to understand it from an examination of his literary work as a whole, was not so much that of the poet or the critic or the essayist as the preacher. This was the vocation—the task for which he had a 'Call;' and he felt it so himself, and knew, as men do in such cases, that it was at once the source of his weakness and his strength. . . . It is perfectly true that Lowell's ascent of the Parnassian steep was somewhat seriously impeded by the republicanism, Neo-Calvinism, Old Liberalism, Humanitarianism, Meliorism, and the rest of the formidable spiritual baggage which he had to haul behind him. . . . The preacher in him, during at least the earlier and more characteristic period of his work, was more than the scholar, more than the critic or the poet. . . . Much of Lowell's teaching is like Carlyle's, a discourse on the text—'work while you have the light.' "—*Sidney Low*.

"There is a high aim and a definite moral purpose in the 'Biglow Papers.' . . . His poems have body as well as spirit; they touch the heart as well as stimulate the intel-

lect ; they inculcate nobleness, purity, and brotherly love, and tend to raise the soul above sordid views of life."—*F. H. Underwood.*

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" New occasions teach new duties ; time makes ancient good uncouth ;  
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth ;  
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires ! We ourselves must pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,  
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted Key."—*The Present Crisis.*

" Where'er a single slave doth pine,  
Where'er one man may help another—  
Thank God for such a birthright, brother !  
That spot of earth is thine and mine ;  
There is the true man's birthplace grand !  
His is a world-wide fatherland !"—*The Fatherland.*

" Life may be given in many ways,  
And loyalty to Truth be sealed  
As bravely in the closet as in the field,  
So bountiful is Fate ;  
But thus to stand beside her,  
When craven churls deride her,  
To front a lie in arms and not to yield,  
This shows, methinks, God's plan  
And measure of stalwart man,  
Limbed like the old heroic breeds,  
Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid earth,  
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,  
Fed from within with all the strength he needs."

—*Commemoration Ode*

✓ 4. **Appreciation of Nature.**—"There is a beautiful feeling in his poems of nature. . . . The charm of Low-

ell's outdoor verse lies in its spontaneity; he loves nature with a child-like joy, her boon companion, finding even in her illusions welcome and relief, just as one gives himself up to a story or a play, and will not be a doubter. Here he never ages, and he beguiles you and me to share his joy. It does me good to see a poet who knows a bird or flower as one friend knows another, yet loves it for itself alone. . . . What Lowell loves most in nature are the trees and their winged habitants and the flowers that grow untended. . . . Give him a touch of Mother Earth, a breath of free air, one flash of sunshine, and he is no longer a book-man and a brooder; his blood runs riot with the Spring; this inborn, poetic elasticity is the best gift of the gods. Lowell trusts in Nature, and she gladdens him. . . . There is little of the ocean in his verse; the sea-breeze brings fewer messages to him than to Longfellow and Whittier. His sense of inland nature is all the more alert; for him the sweet security of meadow paths and orchard closes. He has the pioneer heart, to which a homestead farm is dear and familiar, and native woods and waters are an intoxication."—*E. C. Stedman*.

During Lowell's life Holmes wrote of him :

" He is the poet who can stoop to read  
The secret hidden in a wayside weed ;  
Whom June's warm breath with child-like rapture fills,  
Whose spirit ' dances with the daffodils. ' "

And after the death of Lowell his brother-poet sings again :

" How Nature mourns thee in the still retreat  
Where passed in peace thy love-enchanted hours !  
Where shall we find an eye like thine to greet  
Spring's earliest foot-prints on her opening flowers ?  
Have the pale wayside weeds no fond regret  
For him who read the secrets they unfold ?  
Shall the proud spangles of the field forget  
The verse that lent new glory to their gold ? "

"His love and knowledge of nature were not those of a poet alone, not mere Wordsworthian sentiment, but such as showed, as Darwin long afterward said, to Lowell's great displeasure, that he had in him the making of a naturalist."—*Charles Eliot Norton*.

"So acute and trained an observer of nature, so sympathetic a friend of birds and flowers, so sensitive to the influence and aspects of out-of-door life, that Darwin with frank admiration said that he was born to be a naturalist."—*George William Curtis*.

"He used to enter upon the long walks which have aided in making him one of the poets of nature with the keenest zest. There was no quicker eye for a bird or squirrel, a rare flower or bush, and no more accurate ear for the songs or the commoner sounds of the forest. . . . In landscape he sees the natural object and he paints it; but through it he sees also its significance and its ideal relations. . . . Lowell apparently sympathizes with Chaucer in his joy in nature and in his pleasure in the study of character. . . . When out for a walk nothing escaped him—not the plumage of a bird, the leafage of a tree, the color of a blossom, nor a trait upon a human countenance. He knew almost every bird by its note, its color, and its flight. He knew where flowers grew and when they should appear. All this knowledge might have been possessed by a person with little sentiment; but it was with the eye of love that Lowell looked upon the world."—*F. H. Underwood*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Dear common flower, that grow'st beside the way,  
 Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,  
 . . . . .  
 Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;  
 To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;  
 The eyes thou givest me  
 Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:  
 Not in mid June the golden cuirass'd bee

Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment  
 In the white lily's breezy tent,  
 His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first  
 From the dark green thy yellow circles burst."

—*To the Dandelion.*

" Dear marshes ! vain to him the gift of sight  
 Who cannot in their various incomes share,  
 From every season drawn, of shade and light,  
 Who sees in them but levels brown and bare ;  
 Each change of storm or sunshine scatters free  
 On them its largess of variety ;  
 For Nature with cheap means still works her wonders rare."

—*An Indian-Summer Reverie.*

" Once on a time there was a pool  
 Fringed all about with flag-leaves cool  
 And spotted with cow-lilies garish,  
 Of frogs and pouts the ancient parish.  
 Alders the creaking red-wings sink on,  
 Tussocks that house blithe Bob o' Lincoln  
 Hedged round the unassailed seclusion  
 Where musk-rats piled their cells Carthusian,  
 And many a moss-embroidered log,  
 The wintering-place of summer frog,  
 Slept and decayed with patient skill,  
 As wintering places sometimes will."—*Festina Lente.*

**5. Skill in Portraiture.**—In spite of Poe's virulent rejoinder, the " Fable for Critics " has taken its place in the treasure-house of our national literature as generally a fair and good-natured series of portraits. . . . The portraits in Fitz Adam's Story are more like those of the immortal Canterbury pilgrims than any we have had since.

" Lowell's portrait of Lincoln in the ' Commemoration Ode ' is delineated in a manner that gives this poet a pre-eminence among those who capture likeness in enduring verse, that we award to Velasquez among those who fasten it upon the canvas."—*E. C. Stedman.*

" We may not always agree with him in his estimate of

Dryden, for example—it is difficult to do so—but there he is, with an enviable power of analysis and a capacity to enter into the very souls of some of our cherished literary gods, which we can but envy.”—*G. B. Smith.*

“Fond of frontiers-men and their natural ways, he puts them in a line—‘The shy, wood-wandering brood of character.’ He paints the landlord of the rustic inn. The picture seems as deep-lined and lasting as one of Chaucer’s. Underneath the fun and riot [in “A Fable for Critics”] we find outlined portraits and swift estimates, which, though not always wholly just, are of marvellous acuteness and force. Some of the sketches—for instance, those of Emerson, Whittier, and Hawthorne—in their general faithfulness and power of discrimination are the best ever made of these men either in verse or prose. . . . ‘A Fable for Critics’ is the wittiest of literary satires and the most faithful of caricatures.”—*F. H. Underwood.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“No eye like his to value horse or cow,  
Or gauge the contents of a stack or mow;  
He could foretell the weather at a word,  
He knew the haunt of every beast and bird;  
. . . . .  
Hard-headed and soft-hearted, you’d scarce meet  
A kindlier mixture of the shrewd and sweet;  
Generous by birth, and ill at saying ‘no,’  
Yet in a bargain he was all men’s foe;  
Would yield no inch of vantage in a trade,  
And give away ere nightfall all he made.”

—*Fitz Adam’s Story.*

“His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,  
Thrusting to thin air o’er our cloudy bars,  
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;  
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,  
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,  
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.  
. . . . .

Our children shall behold his fame,  
 The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
 Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,  
 New birth of our new soil, the first American."

—*Commemoration Ode.*

"There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified  
 As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignifed,  
 Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights  
 With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.

If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,  
 Like being stirred up by the very North Pole.

If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to say  
 There is nothing in that which is grand in its way;  
 He is almost the one of your poets that knows  
 How much force, strength, and dignity lie in repose;  
 If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise to mar  
 His thought's modest fulness by going too far."

—*A Fable for Critics.*

✓ **6. Humorous—Satire—Brilliancy.**—An English critic well defines all humor as "a subtle blending of the serious with the comic," and adds: "But the combination of a deep and generous sympathy with a keen perception of the ludicrous is the substratum of the finest kind of humor; and it is that which enables 'Biglow' to pass without any sense of discord from pure satire into strains of genuine poetry."

"Verse made only as satire belongs to a lower order. Of such there are various didactic specimens. But wit has an imaginative side, and Humor springs like Iris—all smiles and tears. The wit of poets often has been the faculty that ripened last, the overflow of their strength and experience. In the 'Biglow Papers,' wit and humor are united as in a composition of high grade. . . . Lowell has been compared to Butler, but 'Hudibras,' whether as poetry or historical satire, is vastly below the master-work of the New England idyllist. . . . My own explanation of things which annoy us in his lof-

tier pieces is that his every-day genius is that of wit and humor. . . . Here [in "The Biglow Papers"] was now seen that maturity of genius, of which humor is a flower, revealing the sound, kind man within the poet. . . . The jesting is far removed from that clownish gabble which, if it still increases, will shortly add another to the list of offences that make killing no murder."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Humor of the purest strain, but humor in deadly earnest. In its course, as in that of a cyclone, it swept all before it—the press, the church, criticism, scholarship— . . . the Mexican war, pleas for slavery, and public men."—*George William Curtis*.

"Mr. Lowell is unquestionably a born humorist. He possesses a humor of thought which is at once broad and subtle; his humor of expression is his American birthright."—*H. D. Traill*.

"They [the "Biglow Papers"] were forcible with the humor which distinguishes great men who keep their eyes and ears open. But besides this common-sense and this humor, there were in the 'Biglow Papers' a wisdom and wit which were equally forcible and more rare."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

"The 'Fable for Critics' affords ample illustration of the liveliness and sparkling spontaneity of his wit. . . . His wit was not as kindly as it was ready; his humor was always genial."—*Charles Eliot Norton*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Wut's the use o' meetin'-goin'  
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,  
Ef it's right to go amowin'  
Feller-men like oats an' rye?  
I dunno but wut it's pooty  
Trainin' round in bobtail coats,—  
But it's curus Christian dooty  
This 'ere cuttin folk's throats.

. . . . .



I'm willin' a man should go tollable strong  
 Agin wrong in the abstract, for thet kind o' wrong  
 Is ollers unpop'lar, an' never gits pitied,  
 Because it's a crime no one ever committed ;  
 But he mustn't be hard on partickler sins,  
 Coz then he'll be kickin' the peoples' own shins."

—*Biglow Papers.*

" The furniture stood round with such an air,  
 There seemed an old maid's ghost in every chair,  
 Which looked as it had scuttled to its place  
 And pulled extempore a Sunday face,  
 Too smugly proper for a world of sin,  
 Like boys on whom the minister comes in.  
 The table, fronting you with icy stare,  
 Strove to look witless that its legs were bare,  
 While the black sofa with its horsehair pall  
 Gloomed like a bier for Comfort's funeral."

—*Fitz Adam's Story.*

" Who always wear spectacles, always look bilious,  
 Always keep on good terms with each *mater-familias*  
 Throughout the whole parish, and manage to rear  
 Ten boys like themselves, on four hundred a year ;  
 Who, fulfilling in turn the same fearful conditions,  
 Either preach through their noses, or go upon missions.  
 In this way our hero got safely to college,  
 Where he bolted alike both his commons and knowledge ;  
 A reading-machine, always wound up and going,  
 He mastered whatever was not worth the knowing."

—*A Fable for Critics.*

✓ 7. Wit.—As distinguished from humor, we mean, by this quality, that form of mental excitement and pleasure that is due mainly to a perception of the incongruous. Lowell's poems abound in grotesquely absurd situations and relations. His wit also appears in his incomparable puns and in the fantastic double rhymes, of which he is such a consummate master. The "Fable for Critics" has been called "a hand-gallop of loose verses."

"The 'Fable' is as full of puns as a pudding of plums. The good ones are the best of their kind, strung together like beads, and the bad ones are so 'atrocious' as to be quite as amusing. . . . No poem of the kind in the language equals it in the two aspects of vivid genius and riotous fun. . . . Regarded as a mere repository of fun, it is inimitable; but the author's are edged tools rather than playthings, and they have been felt through the long struggle. . . . One might believe that the brilliant railery which Lowell afterward turned upon the supporters of slavery had its origin in a reaction from the monotonous oratory of some of his associates. The public was found to be keenly sensitive to the coruscation of wit, and sorely vulnerable to the arrows of ridicule. . . . Its ["A Fable for Critics"] grotesque macaronic lines, with impossible rhymes, its exhaustless store of double-shotted puns, its keen analysis and common-sense, make it one of the most enjoyable of satires. . . . The lines are as full of good-humored counsel as of pungent wit. . . . The sharp thrust in rustic phrase, the native wit, and the irony that played upon the lines [of "Hosea Biglow"], making them like live electric wires, produced a combination of mirth and conviction wholly new. . . . ["A Fable for Critics"] is the gay humor of a youth in the freedom of an anonymous pasquinade—revelling in puns, clashing unexpected and all but impossible rhymes like cymbals, tossing off grotesque epithets and comparisons, and going in a break-neck canter like a race-horse let loose. . . . Wit was as natural to him as breathing, and when the mood was on he could no more avoid seeing and signalling puns than an inebriate could help seeing double, but the wit and the puns were not the end and aim of his talk. . . . Lowell's creations are humorous, though some of them scatter witticisms like rice at a wedding. . . . It is not risking much to say that it ["The Biglow Papers"] is the wittiest and best-sustained satire in

English. . . . It must be repeated, by way of explanation, that, from the first fly-leaf to the colophon, this is the only complete and perfect piece of grotesque comedy in existence. . . . Materials for any number of Hoods exist in it. . . . The wit of Hosea Biglow is the native wit of Lowell—instantaneous as lightning—and Hosea's common sense is Lowell's birthright."—*F. H. Underwood.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Let us glance for a moment, 'tis well worth the pains,  
And note what an average graveyard contains ;  
. . . . .  
There are slave-drivers quietly whipped underground ;  
There bookbinders, done up in boards, are fast bound ;  
There card-players wait till the last trump be played,  
There all the choice spirits get finally laid ;  
There the babe that's unborn is supplied with a berth ;  
There men without legs get their six feet of earth ;  
There lawyers repose, each wrapped up in his case ;  
There seekers of office are sure of a place.  
. . . . .  
Two dozen of Italy's exiles who shoot us his  
Kaisership daily, stern pen-and-ink Brutuses,  
. . . . .  
Nine hundred Teutonic republicans stark  
From Vaterland's battles just won—in the Park,  
Who the happy profession of martyrdom take  
Whenever it gives them a chance at a steak ;  
Sixty-two second Washingtons ; two or three Jacksons :  
And so many everythings-else that it racks one's  
Poor memory too much to continue the list,  
Especially now they no longer exist."—*A Fable for Critics.*

" He called an architect in counsel ;  
' I want,' said he, ' a—you know what, .  
(You are a builder, I am Knott,)  
A thing complete from chimney-pot  
Down to the very groundsel ;

Here's a half acre of good land ;  
 Just have it nicely mapped and planned  
 And make your workmen drive on ;  
 Meadow there is, and upland too,  
 And I should like a water-view,  
 D' you think you could contrive one ?  
 (Perhaps the pump and trough would do,  
 If painted a judicious blue)  
 The woodland I've attended to ;'  
 (He meant three pines stuck up askew,  
 Two dead ones and a live one.)  
 ' A pocket-full of rocks, 't would take  
 To build a house of free-stone,  
 But then it is not hard to make  
 What nowadays is *the* stone ;  
 The cunning painter in a trice  
 Your house's outside petrifies,  
 And people think it very gneiss  
 Without inquiring deeper ;  
*My* money never shall be thrown  
 Away on such a deal of stone,  
 When stone of deal is cheaper."

—*The Unhappy Lot of Mr. Knott.*

" He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
 Some doubtfe o' the sekle,  
 His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
 But hern went pity Zekle."—*The Courtin'*.

8. **Pathos.**—As is the case with all true masters of humor, the fountains of Lowell's fun lie near the sources of his tears. Such poems as "The Changeling," "The First Snow-Fall," and "The Two Angels" are filled with the tenderest pathos.

"Lowell's wife died, leaving him in that gloom from which came the series of short poems . . . the best expression of the finest side of the man's nature, 'The Wind-Harp,' 'Auf Wiedersehen,' 'After the Burial,' and 'The Dead House'—expressions of the strong passions of grief. . . . The only thing I know in English poetry to set beside them

for genuine pathos is the 'Break, break, break' of Tennyson." —*W. J. Stillman.*

"If the test of poetry be in its power over hearts, the ruth in this series [later "Biglow Papers"] must be placed in the highest rank. The beginning is quaint, simple, and even humorous, but with a subdued tone; there is no intimation of the coming pathos. . . . We are led, stanza by stanza, to the heights where thought and feeling become one. . . . They [the lines in reference to the poet's three slain nephews] are palpitant like naked nerves, and every word is like a leaf plucked by Dante, which trickled blood. . . . A letter to the Editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* . . . breaks into an agony of lament for the young heroes fallen in battle, and closes with an apostrophe to Peace that few Americans . . . can read, even for the twentieth time, with dry eyes."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"Of the Biglow epistles, the tenth has the most pathetic undertone. . . . His heart is full with its own sorrows, he half-despises himself 'for rhymin'' when his young kinsmen have fallen in the fray."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"The deep pathos in some of Mr. Lowell's poems is as striking as any of his other qualities. No common note was reached in 'The First Snow-Fall;' . . . he has written nothing so touching and so exquisite as 'The Changeling.' . . . It seems to us that the pathetic and unadorned simplicity of this poem has never been surpassed by any English writer. . . . The strongest utterances are the poems and the ballads in which the author deals with human emotion. For an example take 'The Dead House,' whose pathos must find its way to any heart. . . . In some respects 'The Cathedral' deserves to rank as the highest of all of Mr. Lowell's poetical productions. . . . It is deeply introspective, and is charged with pathetic memories of the long ago."—*G. B. Smith.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,  
 And it hardly seemed a day,  
 When a troop of wandering angels  
 Stole my little daughter away ;  
 Or perhaps those heavenly zingari  
 But loosed the hampering strings,  
 And when they had opened her cage-door,  
 My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,  
 A little angel child,  
 That seems like her bud in full blossom,  
 And smiles as she never smiled :  
 When I wake in the morning, I see it  
 Where she always used to lie,  
 And I feel as weak as a violet  
 Alone 'neath the awful sky."—*The Changeling.*

" While 'way o'erhead, ez sweet an' low  
 Ez distant bells thet ring for meetin'  
 The wedged wil' geese their bugles blow,  
 Further an' further south retreatin'.  
 . . . . .  
 The farm-smokes, sweetes' sight on airth,  
 Slow thru the winter air a-shrinkin'  
 Seem kin' o' sad, an' 'roun' the hearth  
 Of empty places set me thinkin.' "

—*Biglow Papers.*

" I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn  
 Where a little headstone stood ;  
 How the flakes were folding it gently,  
 As did robins the babes in the wood.  
 . . . . .  
 I remembered the gradual patience  
 That fell from that cloud like snow,  
 Flake by flake, healing and hiding  
 The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,  
 'The snow that husheth all,  
 Darling, the merciful Father  
 Alone can make it fall!'"—*The First Snow-Fall.*

¶ 9. **Deep Religious Instinct.**—Although Lowell often ridiculed and always rebelled against that narrow "orthodoxy" in the midst of which he was reared, his poems prove him to be possessed of a profound religious instinct.

"The deep religious instinct, emancipated from all forms, but vibrating with the fitful certainty of an Aeolian harp to 'the wind that bloweth where it listeth'—this is the first thing in Lowell's mind, as it is the second in Longfellow's, and the third in Bryant's."—*H. R. Haweis.*

"The obvious characteristic of the poems [those first published in the volume with the "Legend of Brittany"] is their high religious spirit. It is not a mild and passive morality that we perceive, but the aggressive force of primitive Christianity. . . . Though the physical aspect of evolution had engaged his attention, as it has that of all intellectual men, and had commanded perhaps a startling and dubious assent, yet his strong spiritual nature recoiled in horror from the materialistic application of the doctrine to the origin of things. Force could never be to him the equivalent of spirit, nor law the substitute for God. In conversation once upon the 'promise and potency' phrases of Tyndall, he exclaimed with energy, 'Let whoever will believe that the idea of Hamlet or Lear was developed from a clod; I will not.'"—*F. H. Underwood.*

"In 'What Rabbi Jehosha Said,' and many other poems, he teaches the grandeur of Christian charity and Christian humility. In fact, he is one of the profoundest preachers in the whole brotherhood of song."—*G. B. Smith.*

"He is the poet of pluck and action and purpose, of the

gayety and liberty of virtue. . . . His poetical performance might sometimes, no doubt, be more intensely lyrical, but it is hard to see how it could be more intensely moral—I mean, of course, in the widest sense of the term. His play is as good as a game in the open air ; but when he is serious he is as serious as Wordsworth and much more compact.”

—*Henry James.*

“That justice and law and righteousness are things for which any man with an immortal soul in him would willingly die—these formed the stock of axioms with which the son of the Massachusetts minister started in life. . . . There is hardly anything which Lowell wrote that is not calculated and intended to awaken worthy ambition, generous effort, and an earnest appreciation of purity, nobility, and truth, whether in literature or life. . . . It is pleasant in his last poems to note how the generous enthusiasm for progress, the faith in an ideal, which were the legacies of his early training, remained, through all the bitterness of controversy and after the militant scorn for the mean and unworthy had died down into a placid tolerance.”—*Sidney Low.*

“At the root of his personality lay a deep moral earnestness. Mr. Lowell was of Puritan descent ; and though the training of three generations had refined all Puritan acerbity and narrowness out of him, yet the aggressive moral temper of the Puritan was still in his blood. . . . His own ideas were rather moral than merely literary ; and all his best writing, in poetry, at all events, has a distinct ethical motive.”

—*C. T. Winchester.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ There is no broken reed so poor and base,  
No rush, the bending tilt of swamp-fly blue,  
But he therewith the ravening wolf can chase,  
And guide his flock to springs and pastures new ;



Through ways unlooked for and through many lands,  
Far from the rich folds built with human hands,  
The gracious foot-prints of His love I trace.

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,  
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone ;  
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,  
Texts of despair or hope or joy or moan.

If the chosen soul could never be alone  
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,  
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done ;  
Among dull hearts a prophet never grew ;  
The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude."—*Columbus.*

" I had a little daughter,  
And she was given to me  
To lead me gently backward  
To the Heavenly Father's knee,  
That I, by the force of nature,  
Might in some dim wise divine  
The depth of his infinite patience  
To this wayward soul of mine."  
*The Changeling.*

**10. Idyllic Power.**—Lowell vies with Whittier in his rare ability to picture homely rustic scenes and to bring out the latent poetry concealed in rural home life.

"The 'Biglow Papers' were the first, and are the best, metrical presentation of Yankee character in its thought, dialect, and manners. . . . Never sprang the flower of art from a more unpromising soil ; yet these are eclogues as true as those of Theocritus or Burns. . . . This bucolic idyl ["The Courtin' "] is without a counterpart ; no richer juice can be pressed from the wild grape of the Yankee soil."  
—*E. C. Stedman.*

"This ["The Courtin' "] is the most genuine of our native idyls. It affects one like coming upon a new and quaint

blossoming orchid, or hearing Schumann's '*Einsame Blume*.'  
 . . . In 'The Courtin' ' and 'Somthin' in the Pastoral  
 Line ' he has shown for the first time the idyllic side of New  
 England life."—*F. H. Underwood*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown  
 An' peeked in thru' the winder,  
 An' there sot Huld' all alone,  
 'ith no one nigh to hender. . . .

The very room, coz she was in,  
 Seemed warm from floor to ceilin' ;  
 An she looked ful ez rosy agin  
 Es the apples she was peelin'. . . .

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,  
 A-raspin' on the scraper,—  
 All ways to once her feelins flew  
 Like sparks in burnt-up paper."—*The Courtin'*.

" Here,  
 The scissors-grinder, pausing, doffs his hat,  
 And lets the kind breeze, with its delicate fan,  
 Winnow the heat from out his dank gray hair,—  
 A grimy Ulysses, a much-wandered man,  
 Whose feet are known to all the populous ways,  
 And many men and manners he hath seen,  
 Not without fruit of solitary thought."

—*Under the Willows*.

" Here, sometimes, in this paradise of shade,  
 Rippled with western winds, the dusty Tramp,  
 Seeing the treeless causey burn beyond,  
 Halts to unroll his bundle of strange food  
 And munch an unearned meal.

. . . . .

Envy, or scorn, or hatred, tears life-long  
With vulture beak ; yet the high soul is left ;  
And faith, which is but hope grown wise, and love,  
And patience which at last shall overcome."

—*Prometheus.*

**12. Sectionalism—Nationalism.**—Quite as much as Whittier, though in another way, Lowell proclaims himself a son of New England and of America. He gloried in being an American. It has been justly said of him that "he did more than any other man to command respect for our institutions" in the minds of all Europeans. During his later years Lowell was charged by that class of pseudo-statesmen against whom he had directed some of his keenest darts, with being un-American. Never was a more baseless slander uttered. In a recently-published letter addressed to his friend, Joel Benton, and bearing date of January, 1876, Lowell indignantly, exclaims: "These fellows have no notion of what love of country means. It is in my very blood and bones. If I am not an American, who ever was? I am no pessimist, nor ever was. . . . What fills me with doubt and dismay is the degradation of the moral tone. Is it, or is it not, a result of Democracy? Is ours a government of the people, by the people, for the people, or a Kakistocracy rather, for the benefit of knaves at the cost of fools? Democracy is, after all, nothing more than an experiment, like another ; and I know only one way of judging it—by its results. Democracy in itself is no more sacred than monarchy. It is man who is sacred. . . . It is honor, justice, culture that make liberty invaluable. . . . Forgive me for this long letter of justification, which I am willing to write for your friendly eye, though I should scorn to make any public defence. Let the tenor of my life and writings defend me."

"He is an American of the Americans, alive to the idea and movement of the whole country, singularly independent in his tests of its men and products—from whatever section or

in however unpromising a form they chance to appear. . . . He seems to represent New England more variously than either of his comrades. We find in his work, as in theirs, her loyalty and moral purpose. She has been at cost for his training, and he in turn has read her heart, honoring her as a mother before the world and seeing beauty in her common garb and speech. . . . To him the Eastern States are what the fathers, as he has said, desired to found—no new Jerusalem but a New England and, if it might be, a better one. His poetry has the strength, the tenderness, and the defects of the down-East temper.”—*E. C. Stedman*.

“Lowell was an intense New Englander. There is no finer figure of the higher Puritan type. The New England soil, from which he sprang, was precious to him. The New England legend, the New England language, New England character and achievement, were all his delight and familiar study. . . . Burns did not give to the Scottish tongue a nobler immortality than Lowell gave to the dialect of New England. . . . Literature was his pursuit, but patriotism was his passion. His love of country was that of a lover for his mistress. . . . Nowhere in literature is there a more magnificent and majestic personification of a country whose name is sacred to its children, nowhere a profounder passion of patriotic loyalty, than the closing lines of the ‘Commemoration Ode.’ The American whose heart, swayed by that lofty music, does not thrill and palpitate with solemn joy and high resolve, does not yet know what it is to be an American. Nobody who could adequately depict the Yankee ever knew him as Lowell knew him, for he was at heart the Yankee that he drew. . . . The ‘Biglow Papers’ are distinctively American. . . . They could have been written nowhere else but in Yankee New England by a New England Yankee.”—*George William Curtis*.

“His America was a country worth hearing about, a magnificent conception, an admirably consistent and lovable ob-

ject of allegiance. If the sign that in Europe one knew him best by was his intense national consciousness, one felt that this consciousness could not sit lightly on a man in whom it was the strongest form of piety. . . . New England was heroic, for he felt in his pulses the whole history of her *origines*. . . . One felt in his patriotism the depth of passion that hums through much of his finest verse—almost the only passion that, to my sense, his poetry contains—the accent of chivalry, of the lover, the knight ready to do battle for his mistress. Above all, it was a particular allegiance to New England; . . . it was impossible to know him without a sense that he had a rare divination of the hard realities of her past.”—*Henry James*.

“In the poet’s writing we find the life and passion of New England to a verity and the best thought of our people at large. . . . Lowell will chiefly be remembered as poet because of his New England heart and voice—his idyls of the Junes and Decembers of Massachusetts and his verse of anti-slavery and patriotism.”—*C. F. Richardson*.

“The elementary fact about Lowell, which stands at the threshold of every discussion of his works, is that he was born and bred a New Englander. It is a fact which he himself does not permit his readers to forget. In his prose and in his verse he goes back to it again and again. Literature will know him longest, not as the critic nor as the writer of elegies, lyrics, and odes, but as the poet who gave literary form and value to the indigenous humor, rhetoric, and satire of the farmers of New England.”—*Sidney Low*.

“If there was one quality more than another that summed up Lowell’s characteristics, it was his Americanism. . . . Longfellow and Bryant are essentially English, modified slightly by their American environment.”—*G. E. Woodberry*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" I first drew in New England's air, and from her hearty breast  
Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me rest ;  
And if my words seem treason to the dullard and the tame,  
'Tis but my Bay-state dialect—our fathers spoke the same."

" O Beautiful ! my Country ! ours once more !  
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair  
O'er such sweet brows as never others wore,  
And letting thy set lips,  
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,  
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare ;  
What words divine of lover or of poet  
Could tell our love and make thee know it,  
Among the nations bright beyond compare ? "

—*Commemoration Ode.*

" For, O, my country, touched by thee,  
The gray hairs gather back their gold ;  
Thy thought sets all my pulses free ;  
The heart refuses to be old ;  
The love is all that I can see.  
Not to thy natal day belong  
Time's prudent doubt or age's wrong,  
But gifts of gratitude and song :  
Unsummoned crowd the thankful words,  
As sap in spring-time floods the tree,  
Foreboding the return of birds,  
For all that thou hast been to me ! "

—*An Ode for the Fourth of July.*

**13. Melody—Classical Finish.**—" The public was right in its liking for ' The Changeling,' ' She Came and Went,' and ' The First Snow-Fall,' than which there are few more touching lyrics of the affections. . . . The public keeps in store for him the adage of the wilful songster. That he can sing was discovered at the outset. . . . He is all

poet, and the blithest, most unstudied songster on the old Bay Shore. . . . Especially in his shorter lyrics, there is a perfect melody, real music, which has a charm apart from the meaning of the verse."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"These poems [on Garrison, Phillips, etc.], especially that on 'The Present Crisis,' have a Tyrtean resonance, a stately rhetorical rhythm, that make their dignity of thought, their intense feeling and picturesque imagery, superbly effective in recitation."—*George William Curtis*.

"The terseness, ease, and finish of these lines [Lowell's shorter lyrics], in which compliment blends with the wisdom of life, and the whole is subdued within the range of personal talk from friend to friend, are qualities unique in our poetry, and recall the modes of utterance of a more polished, lettered age, when intellect and manners held their own beside emotion, and the literary life was more complete in manly powers."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I saw the twinkle of white feet,  
I saw the flash of robes descending ;  
Before her ran an influence fleet,  
That bowed my heart like barley bending. . . .

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,  
And shuns the hands would seize upon her ;  
Follow thy life, and she will sue  
To pour for thee the cup of honor."—*Hebe*.

"In the twilight deep and silent  
Comes thy spirit unto mine,  
When the moonlight and the starlight  
Over cliff and woodland shine,  
And the quiver of the river  
Seems a thrill of joy benign."—*Reverie*.

“ All things are sad :—  
I go and ask of Memory,  
That she tell sweet tales to me  
To make me glad ;  
And she takes me by the hand,  
Leadeth to old places,  
Showeth the old faces  
In her hazy mirage-land ;  
Oh, her voice is sweet and low,  
And her eyes are fresh to mine  
As the dew  
Gleaming through  
The half-unfolded Eglantine,  
Long ago, long ago !  
But I feel that I am only  
Yet more sad and yet more lonely ! ”—*Song.*



## LONGFELLOW, 1807-1882

**Biographical Outline.**—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, born in Portland, Mass. (afterward Maine), February 27, 1807, of parents descended on both sides from English ancestry; father a lawyer of high standing, a Harvard classmate of Channing and Judge Story, and at one time a member of Congress; Longfellow had four brothers and four sisters; as a boy he manifests the gentleness so characteristic of his poems, disliking violent games, noises, etc.; he has early access to the best English classics, and is especially fond of Cowper, Ossian, and Washington Irving; he is reared strictly, although he goes, with his family and church, into the earlier forms of Unitarianism and, as a young man, takes singing and dancing lessons; he enters a private school at the age of five, but soon withdraws, disgusted with the companionship of rough boys; at six he enters the Portland Academy, and is "half through his Latin grammar" before he is seven; among his teachers at the school was Jacob Abbott; as a boy Longfellow is handsome, frank, and retiring; his school vacations are spent on the farm of his grandfather, Judge Longfellow, at Graham Corners, near Portland, and at Hiram, where his maternal grandfather, General Wadsworth, of Revolutionary fame, and also a Harvard graduate, had an estate of 7,000 acres; Longfellow's first published poem, "The Battle of Lovell's Pond," commemorating an Indian fight at a pond near Hiram, appears anonymously in the *Portland Gazette*, November 20, 1820 (the lines on "Mr. Finney and his Turnip," once so widely published as Longfellow's first poem, are not his); about this time he forms a literary partnership with a boy named William Browne, and together they write plays, epi-

grams, and "tragedies;" Longfellow's youthful feelings and experiences are afterward expressed in the poem "My Lost Youth."

Longfellow enters Bowdoin College, of which his father was a trustee, in 1821, but does the work of Freshman year at home, and begins his residence at Brunswick in 1822, rooming with his elder brother in the house where Mrs. Stowe afterward wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" in college Longfellow maintains a high rank, and is noted for his refined manners and happy temperament; he confesses that he "cares little about politics or anything of the kind;" in the winter vacation of 1823-24 he visits Boston and dances at "a splendid ball" given at Cambridge in honor of the Russian Consul; while in college he contributes to a Portland journal several poems not thought worth reprinting and to the *American Monthly Magazine* several prose articles; in November, 1824, he publishes in the *U. S. Military Gazette* a poem entitled "Thanksgiving," which shows plainly the influence of Bryant, who was then contributing to the same periodical; during 1825 Longfellow publishes in the *Gazette* sixteen poems, of which five were reprinted in "Voices of the Night," his first volume of poems; he also contributes to the *Gazette* three prose essays; at this time, when Longfellow was only seventeen, his name was "honorably mentioned" in the *Galaxy* with those of Bryant (then already famous) and Percival, and Longfellow's poem "Autumnal Nightfall" was attributed to Bryant; in March, 1824, he writes to his father: "I am anxious to know what you intend to make of me. . . : I hardly think nature intended me for the bar, the pulpit, or the dissecting-room. I am altogether in favor of the farmer's life;" while at Bowdoin he unites with five fellow-students in forming a Unitarian club, and disseminates Unitarian tracts; as early as December, 1824, he proposes to his father to allow him to spend a year at Harvard after graduation, where he means to study history, literature, and Italian, and after which

he proposes to attach himself to some literary journal as a means of livelihood; he adds: "The fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature. My whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centres in it. . . . I *will be eminent* in something;" at graduation, in September, 1825, he stands fourth in a class of thirty-eight; immediately after Commencement he is offered the newly established chair of modern languages at Bowdoin, on the condition that he visit Europe to prepare himself for the place; he remains at Portland, awaiting mild weather for his ocean voyage, till May, 1826, meantime reading a little Blackstone in his father's office, but devoting most of his time to writing; during this winter he writes "Autumn," "Musings," "The Burial of the Minnesink," and "The Song of the Birds;" he starts for Europe by way of Boston, Northampton, Albany, and New York early in May, 1826; at Northampton Dr. Channing gives him letters to Irving, Southey, and Professor Eichorn of Göttingen; he reaches Havre June 15th, after a month's voyage, and journeys by diligence to Paris, where he remains till February, 1827, spending the warm months of the summer at Auteuil and making a pedestrian tour along the Loire and Cher through Orleans, Tivher, Blois, Amboise, Tours, Vendome, and Chartres; at Paris he meets Cooper and Sidney Smith; he leaves Paris for Madrid late in February, 1827, travelling by way of Bordeaux, Bayonne, Tolosa, and Burgos; at Madrid he comes into close social relations with Alexander Everett, then American Minister to Spain, and with Washington Irving, then writing his "Life of Columbus;" Longfellow visits Segovia and the Escorial; he studies Spanish industriously, refusing to return to America "a mere charlatan," saying, "though I might deceive others as to the extent of my knowledge, I cannot so easily deceive myself;" in September, 1827, he leaves Madrid for Italy, travelling by way of Cordova, Seville, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malaga, Granada, Marseilles, Toulon, Nice, Genoa, and Pisa

to Florence, where he remains several weeks and sees much brilliant society ; he spends the spring and early summer of 1828 in Naples and Rome, and is dangerously ill at Rome in July ; he convalesces at Arricia, returns to Rome, and remains till December, and then goes to Dresden by way of Venice, Verona, Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, Trieste, Vienna, and Prague ; meantime he learns that the trustees of Bowdoin have withdrawn their offer of a professorship because of a lack of funds, and have offered him instead an instructorship, which he promptly declines ; by this time (December, 1828) he has acquired a fluent command of French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian ; he reaches Dresden late in December, and settles down to the study of German, greatly aided socially by letters of introduction from Irving ; late in February he goes to Göttingen to join his friend Preble ; in March, 1829, he writes to his sister : " My poetic career is finished. Since I left home I have hardly put two lines together ; " in the spring of 1829 he takes a vacation in England, and returns through Holland to Göttingen and his German studies ; in May, 1829, he begins to write " a kind of sketch-book of scenes in France, Spain, and Italy ; " he is recalled in June, 1829, by the dangerous illness of his sister and by the refusal of his father to supply funds for a longer European residence ; he reaches New York August 11, 1829, after the death of his sister Elizabeth.

After again refusing a proffered instructorship at Bowdoin, he is elected, September 1, 1829, professor of modern languages at a salary of \$800 a year, and is also made librarian with an additional salary of \$100 ; he takes up his work at once, and begins by translating for his pupils a small French grammar and editing a collection of French proverbs and a Spanish reader ; at the Commencement of 1830 he delivers his inaugural address on the origin and growth of the languages and literature of Southern Europe ; in 1831 he begins to contribute to the *North American Review*, then edited by his friend Alexander Everett ; in September, 1831, he marries Mary

Storer Potter, the daughter of a Portland neighbor ; he reads the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Bowdoin in September, 1832, and repeats it by request at Harvard in 1833, in connection with an oration by Edward Everett ; he publishes the first five sketches of "*Outre Mer*" in the *New England Magazine* under the title of "The Schoolmaster ;" the first two sketches of "*Outre Mer*" are published anonymously in pamphlet form in Boston in 1833 ; Longfellow's first published book, however, was a translation from the Spanish of Don Jorge Manrique, Lope de Vega, and others ; in December, 1834, he is appointed to succeed George Ticknor as Smith Professor of modern languages at Harvard, with the privilege of a year and a half in Europe at his own expense before taking the chair.

He sails for Europe with his wife in April, 1835, first arranging for the publication of "*Outre Mer*" in two volumes ; in London he meets the Carlyles ; thence, in the summer, by way of Hamburg to Copenhagen and Stockholm, where he studies Swedish, Finnish, and Danish ; he is detained at Amsterdam on his way to Germany by his wife's illness, and devotes a month to the study of Dutch ; his wife dies at Rotterdam, November 29, 1835 ; Longfellow pushes on to Heidelberg, where he settles down to the study of German, and where he first meets Bryant, then residing in Heidelberg with his family ; in June, 1836, Longfellow goes to Switzerland by way of Munich, Milan, and the Simplon ; he spends two months travelling about Switzerland, leaves Heidelberg for Paris late in August, 1836, and sails for America early in October ; in December, 1836, he takes up his work as a professor at Harvard, and soon enters upon his life-long intimacy with Charles Sumner, who was then lecturing in the Harvard Law School ; in March, 1837, he begins his long correspondence with Hawthorne, and soon afterward really introduces Hawthorne to the literary world by writing for the *North American Review* a favorable criticism on "Twice Told Tales ;" in May, 1837, he takes lodgings in Craigie House

(once Washington's head-quarters), where he resides during the rest of his life ; here, from 1837 to 1845, Longfellow writes many poems, and submits them to his intimate friends, Felton, Sumner, and Hillard ; the " Psalm of Life " was written here July 26, 1838, and appeared in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* in the following October, attracting much attention.

In August, 1838, Longfellow described his daily routine as follows : " I smoke a good deal, wear a broad-brimmed black hat, molest no one, and dine out frequently. In winter I go much into Boston society ; " he begins writing " Hyperion " November 27, 1838, and writes " The Reaper and the Flowers " on the 6th of the following December, " with peace in my heart and not a few tears in my eyes ; " he publishes " Hyperion " in two volumes in the summer of 1829, and his first volume of poems, " Voices of the Night," late in the autumn of the same year ; he receives \$375 in notes for the manuscript of " Hyperion ; " the heroine of " Hyperion " is a true portraiture of the lady who afterward became Mrs. Longfellow ; in March, 1839, the poet writes : " I have three lectures a week and recitations without number. I go into my recitation-room between seven and eight and come out between three and four, with one hour's intermission ; " he writes " The Wreck of the Hesperus " October 30, 1839 ; during this period of his life he is in very close touch with Sumner, Hillard, Felton, Hawthorne, and Prescott, dining with them very often, and often entertaining them at his rooms in Craigie House ; in January, 1831, Longfellow gives three lectures on Dante before the Mercantile Library Association of New York ; " Voices of the Night " passes through six editions during its first two years ; " The Skeleton in Armor " appears in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* in January, 1841 ; by the summer of 1841 Longfellow has become so famous that, while on a visit to Philadelphia with Sumner, he is " lionized " till he finds it a bore ; in October, 1841, he

writes "Excelsior" and "God's Acre," and begins "The Children of the Lord's Supper;" in the following month he writes "Blind Bartimeus;" about this time he begins also his "Golden Legend," of which the first part was not published till 1851 and the whole (the trilogy called "Christus") not till 1873; in December, 1841, he publishes his second volume of verse under the title "Ballads and Other Poems."

In the spring of 1842, being in poor health, Longfellow obtains a leave of absence for six months, and sails for Germany, with the intention of seeking health at a water-cure near Boppard; here he meets the young German poet Freiligrath, with whom Longfellow forms a close friendship, which lasts through life; he also makes brief visits to Paris, Antwerp, and Bruges, and while at Bruges gains inspiration for the "Belfry" poems, published a year or two later; he returns to America by way of Heidelberg, Nuremberg, Cologne, Ostend, and London, where he is royally welcomed by Dickens, and becomes the novelist's guest at Broadstairs, in Kent; Longfellow reaches Cambridge in November, 1842, much improved in health, and soon after his return publishes a small pamphlet of poems on slavery, most of which were written during the homeward voyage; the "Ballads" reaches a fifth edition by the summer of 1843; in July, 1843, Longfellow marries Miss Frances E. Appleton, daughter of a prominent Boston merchant, a lady whom he had met in Switzerland six years before and had immortalized in "Hyperion;" while on his wedding journey to "the old-fashioned country seat" near Pittsfield, Mass., Longfellow sees "the old clock on the stairs;" they return in the autumn to Craigie House, which Mrs. Longfellow's father buys for them, together with a plot of land across the street, to give them an uninterrupted view of the Charles River; during this autumn he edits two large volumes on the Poets and Poetry of Europe, but in doing this work so strains his eyes that for many years he is unable to use them except in the daytime and then for but short intervals; he also

begins to translate Dante about this time ; in a letter to Whittier in 1844 he declines a nomination to Congress, saying : " I rejoice in freedom from slavery of all kinds, but I cannot for a moment think of entering the political arena ; " during 1845 he writes several short poems, including " The Old Clock on the Stairs," " To a Child," " The Bridge," " Birds of Passage," and " The Arrow and the Song," and begins " Evangeline," which he at first calls " Gabrielle ; " late in 1845 he publishes an illustrated volume containing the short poems just named, with others already published, and wins high praise from Bryant ; in February, 1846, he publishes a cheap two-volume edition of his poems, and revises "*Outre Mer* ; " he writes " The Builders " during the following May ; by July, 1846, 12,000 copies of " Voices of the Night " had been sold ; Longfellow writes " Pegasus in Pound " in December, 1846, and uses it as a prologue to " The Estray," published during the same month ; he finishes " Evangeline " February 27, 1847, and at once begins his prose romance " Kavanagh ; " he revises " Evangeline " at Oak Grove, near Portland, during the summer vacation, and publishes it October 30, 1847 ; there is much hostile criticism of the hexameter ; the story on which " Evangeline " is based had first been suggested to Hawthorne by a Boston clergyman, but Hawthorne declined it for a romance and gave it to Longfellow ; much of " Evangeline " was first written with a pencil in the dark, to save the author's eyes, and was afterward copied out ; 6,000 copies were sold within six months of publication ; Longfellow is much depressed by the death of his little daughter, Fannie, August 11, 1848 ; he finishes " Kavanagh " November 9, 1848, and publishes it May 13, 1849 ; he begins " The Building of the Ship " June 18, 1849, and publishes it in a collection of his poems called " Seaside and Fireside " in the following November, receiving \$1,000 for the first edition ; this volume contained " Resignation " and " The Fire of Driftwood."



In 1850 Longfellow again takes up "Christus," saying in his journal: "Now I long to try a loftier strain in sublimer song, whose broken melodies have for so many years breathed through my soul in the better hours of life;" he writes several cantos of "The Golden Legend" during the winter of 1850, and hears Fanny Kemble read "The Building of the Ship" before 3,000 Bostonians; in the spring of 1850, with his family, he visits New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, meeting Bryant, Webster, and Henry Clay; he spends the summer of 1850 at Nahant, where he lives every summer thereafter for many years, and meets there Whittier and the Carey sisters; he finishes "The Golden Legend" in March, 1851, and it is published in the following December, and sells at first at the rate of two hundred copies a day; during 1852 he entertains many eminent people, including Jenny Lind and Kossuth; he begins his translation of Dante's "Purgatorio" in February, 1853, and gives in the following June a farewell dinner to Hawthorne, then just starting to take his consulship at Liverpool; he calls 1853 "the most unproductive year of my life;" late in March, 1854, on the occasion of the birth of his daughter simultaneously with the death of Lowell's wife, Longfellow writes "The Two Angels;" on April 19, 1854, he delivers at Harvard what he calls "my last lecture—the last I shall ever deliver anywhere;" in May, 1854, he writes "Prometheus and Epimetheus" and "The Rope-walk;" he begins "Hiawatha" in June of this year, and works at it during his annual summer residence at Nahant; his resignation of the professorship of modern languages at Harvard, which he had talked of making for years, is accepted September 11, 1854, and thus ends his life of eighteen years as a teacher; like Lowell, he had felt "the yoke" for years, and had worried because his teaching, his social and family duties, and his correspondence left him so little time for writing; late in January, 1855, Lowell is elected his successor at Harvard; Longfellow fin-

ishes "Hiawatha" March 21, 1855, and writes "My Lost Youth" nine days later; "Hiawatha" is published November 10, 1855, and the first edition of 5,000 copies is sold in advance (Longfellow kept the copyright of his books in his own hands); over 11,000 copies of "Hiawatha" were sold in England during the first month; in the autumn and winter of 1855-56 Longfellow entertains Ole Bull, Thackeray, and T. B. Reed; he begins "The Courtship of Miles Standish" December 2, 1856; by March 31, 1857, the sales of his books in America had reached the following aggregates: "Voices of the Night," 43,550 copies; "Ballads," etc., 40,470; "The Spanish Student," 38,400; "The Belfry of Bruges," 38,300; "Evangeline," 38,550; "Hiawatha," 50,000; "Outre Mer," 7,500; "Hyperion," 14,550; "Kavanagh," 10,500.

In December, 1857, Longfellow unites with Lowell, Motley, Emerson, Holmes, Cabot, and Underwood in establishing the *Atlantic Monthly*; he finishes "Sandalphon" January 18, 1858, and publishes it soon afterward; "The Courtship of Miles Standish" is finished March 22, 1858, and is published in the following October, reaching a sale of 25,000 copies during its first week, while 10,000 copies are sold in London the first day after its appearance; in the summer of 1859 Longfellow receives the degree of LL.D. from Harvard; on April 6, 1860, he visits the spire of the Old North Church in Boston, and on the 19th he writes "Paul Revere's Ride"; during the following October he assists in entertaining the Prince of Wales; in November he sits for Darley's famous picture, "Washington Irving and his Friends," and writes "The Saga of King Olaf"; on July 9, 1861, Mrs. Longfellow's dress catches fire, and she dies the next day from the burns and the shock; Longfellow is so affected that, during the remaining twenty-one years of his life, he can never write or speak of his loss; but after his death his beautiful sonnet on his wife's death entitled "The Cross of Snow," written in

1879, is found among his papers; Longfellow himself was severely burned while trying to save his wife; late in 1861 he seeks relief from his sorrow by taking up his translation of Dante, begun and laid aside years before; for a time he translates a canto a day; in June, 1862, with a party of friends, he visits Niagara, stopping two days at Trenton Falls; from Niagara the party go to Montreal by way of the Thousand Islands and the Rapids, and thence home by way of Burlington; in October, 1862, with Fields, he visits the old Red Horse Tavern in Sudbury, Mass., and begins the "Tales of a Wayside Inn;" he finishes the first draft of his Dante translation April 16, 1863, having written "a canto a day for thirty-four days in succession," and begins making notes for the same; the "Tales of a Wayside Inn" (first called "The Sudbury Tales") is published November 25, 1863 (in the "Tales" the poet is T. W. Parsons; the Sicilian, Luigi Monti; the theologian, Professor Treadwell; and the student, Henry Ware Wales. Of these, the first three used to spend their summers at the Inn); early in 1864 Longfellow revises "Hyperion" for a new edition, and writes several of his "Birds of Passage;" on May 23d he attends the funeral of Hawthorne, and soon afterward writes his poem on Hawthorne; the first volume of the Dante translation appears in February, 1865, and a special copy is forwarded to the Italian Minister in time for the sixcentennial anniversary ceremonies in honor of the Italian poet; all three volumes of the Dante translation are very carefully scrutinized by Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton, both meeting Longfellow one evening a week, as "The Dante Club," and going very carefully over every word and construction; in November, 1865, Longfellow gives a dinner to Mr. Burlingame, our Minister to China, in honor of the reception of a Chinese fan, on which some "celestial" poet had written "The Psalm of Life" in Chinese characters; Longfellow completes the "long labor" of the notes to Dante and the revision January 1, 1867; his sixtieth

birthday, February 27, 1867, is celebrated with a poetical tribute from Lowell ; early in the following May Longfellow sails on his fourth and last visit to Europe, in company with his second son, his son's bride, Longfellow's three young daughters, his two sisters, a brother, and Mr. "Tom" Appleton ; the party visit the Lake district and go thence to Cambridge, where Longfellow receives the degree of LL.D. ; thence to London, where the poet is overwhelmed with public and private honors by many eminent people, including Gladstone, Dean Stanley, and the Prince of Wales and Queen Victoria, on both of whom he calls by special invitation ; Longfellow also revisits Dickens at Gad's Hill, and spends two days with Tennyson on the Isle of Wight ; the party go thence to the Continent and up the Rhine to Switzerland, where they spend the summer ; they spend the autumn in Paris and the winter in Rome and Naples ; returning in the spring of 1869 by way of Munich and Nuremberg, they stop briefly in England and Scotland, and at Oxford Longfellow receives the degree of D.C.L. ; he returns to Cambridge September 1, 1869.

The death of Hawthorne, Felton, and Sumner, and the absence of Agassiz and Lowell sadden the poet's latest years, though he still keeps up his companionship with Norton, Holmes, and Emerson, and entertains many noted Europeans at Craigie House ; in January, 1870, he begins the second series of "Tales of a Wayside Inn," and in the following May he prepares a supplement to his "Poets and Poetry of Europe," adding several new translations of his own ; in November, 1870, he takes up his long contemplated "divine tragedy" of "Christus," which is published in December, 1871 ; late in 1871 he writes "Judas Maccabeus" on a theme contemplated for twenty years but treated in twelve days ; early in 1872 he writes "Michael Angelo" in sixteen days, but this poem is not published till after his death ; in the spring of 1872 he publishes "Three Books of Song," being the second part of "Tales of a Wayside Inn," "Judas Maccabeus," and

"A Handful of Translations;" in the autumn of 1872 the "Christus" appears, making, with the notes, interludes, etc., a large volume; after its appearance "The Golden Legend" is withdrawn as a separate work; on his sixty-sixth birthday, February 27, 1873, Longfellow publishes the third "day" of the "Tales of a Wayside Inn," and soon afterward republishes it in a small volume with several lyrics, under the title "Aftermath;" he completes "The Hanging of the Crane" January 4, 1874, and Robert Bonner pays him \$3,000 for the use of the poem in the *New York Ledger*; in 1875 "The Hanging of the Crane" is published in a volume with several other poems, under the title "Pandora's Box;" this volume contained, also, "*Morituri Salutamus*," written at the request of the poet's class of 1825 and delivered at the Bowdoin Commencement of 1875; in August, 1877, he receives from the Harpers \$1,000 for "Keramos," which is published in 1878, with Longfellow's tributes to Lowell, Tennyson, Whittier, and others, in a volume called "Keramos;" he continues to pass his summers at Nahant, with always a week at his boyhood home in Portland; in 1879, on his seventy-second birthday, he is presented by the school-children of Cambridge with a chair made from the wood of the "spreading chestnut-tree" under which "the village smithy" formerly stood; late in the same year he writes his poem on Burns, which appears in 1880 with seventeen other short poems in a thin volume called "*Ultima Thule*;" in 1880 the poet's birthday is widely celebrated by the school-children throughout the country; he writes his sonnet "My Books," December 26, 1882, and in the following January the poem "Mad River" and the sonnet "Possibilities;" on March 15, 1882, he writes his last lines, being the closing stanza of "The Bells of San Blas;" he dies at his Cambridge home, March 24, 1882.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

### I. Artistic Fidelity—Finish.

"Had Theocritus written in English, not Greek,  
 I believe that his exquisite sense would scarce change a line  
 Of that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral Evangeline.  
 That's not ancient nor modern, its place is apart  
 Where time has no sway, in the realm of pure Art;  
 'Tis a shrine of retreat from earth's hubbub and strife,  
 As quiet and chaste as the author's own life."—*Lowell*.

"Longfellow's artistic ability is admirable, because it is not seen. It is rather mental than mechanical. . . . The best artist is he who accommodates his diction to his subject; and in this sense Longfellow is an artist. He selects with

great delicacy and precision the exact phrase which best suggests his idea."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Longfellow is a craftsman of unerring taste. He lived for poetry. . . . The nicest skill was required to protect the verse [that of "Hiawatha"] from gathering an effect of burlesque or of commonplace; yet this it never does. . . . He was a lyrical artist whose taste outranked his inspiration. . . . He always gave of his best; neither toil nor trouble could dismay him until art had done its perfect work. It was a kind of genius—his sure perception of the fit and attractive."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"In the 'Skeleton in Armor' we find a pure and perfect thesis, artistically treated. We find the beauty of bold courage and self-confidence, of love and maiden devotion, of reckless adventure, and finally, of life-continuing grief. Combined with all this we have numerous points of beauty, apparently insulated, but all aiding the main effect or impression. The heart is stirred, and the mind does not lament its malinstruction. The meter is simple, sonorous, well-balanced, and fully adapted to the subject. On the whole, there are few truer poems than this."—*Edgar A. Poe.*

"Longfellow, though not a very great magician and master of language—not a Keats by any means—has often, by sheer force of plain sincerity, struck exactly the right note, and matched his thought with music that haunts us and will not be forgotten."—*Andrew Lang.*

"This fine sense of form, this intuitive perception of fitness, was an inestimable endowment of the artist, and is one of his passports to immortality. . . . In all that calls for delicate taste, a fine sense of fitness, and a skilful use of material already formed, this trilogy ["Christus"] has the poet's distinctive mark."—*H. E. Scudder.*

"An exquisite literary artist, a very Benvenuto of grace and skill. . . . A literary artist of consummate elegance."—*George William Curtis.*



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Maiden ! with the meek, brown eyes,  
In whose orbs a shadow lies  
Like the dusk in evening skies !

" Thou whose locks outshine the sun,  
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,  
As the braided streamlets run !

" Standing, with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet ! "

—*Maidenhood.*

" The sun is bright, the air is clear,  
The darting swallows soar and sing,  
And from the stately elms I hear  
The bluebird prophesying spring.

" All things rejoice in youth and love,  
The fulness of their first delight !  
And learn from the soft heavens above  
The melting tenderness of night."

—*It Is Not Always May.*

" She lies asleep,  
And from her parted lips her gentle breath  
Comes like the fragrance from the lips of flowers ;  
Her tender limbs are still, and on her breast  
The cross she prayed to, ere she fell asleep,  
Rises and falls with the soft tide of dreams,  
Like a light barge safe moored."—*The Spanish Student.*

**2. Perception of Beauty.**—" They are wrong who make light of Longfellow's service as an American poet. His admirers may be no longer a critical majority, yet surely he helped to quicken the New World sense of beauty. . . . Our true rise of poetry may be dated from Longfellow's method of exciting an interest in it as an expression of beauty and feeling. . . . Puritanism was opposed to beauty as a

strange god and to sentiment as an idle thing. Longfellow so adapted the beauty and sentiment of other lands to the convictions of his people as to beguile their reason through their finer senses and speedily to satisfy them that loveliness and righteousness may go together."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Were it not that young misses have made the phrase of equivocal meaning, we would call him 'a beautiful poet.' He has a feeling exquisitely fine for what is generally understood by the term of beauty—that is, for actual earthly beauty, idealized and refined by the imagination. . . . His sense of beauty, though uncommonly vivid, is not the highest of which the mind is capable. He has little conception of its mysterious spirit. . . . His mind never appears oppressed, nor his sight dimmed by its exceeding glory. He feels and loves and creates what is beautiful; but he hymns no reverence, he pays no adoration to the Spirit of Beauty."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"His powers were rare, his studies were helpful, his sense of proportion and of melody exquisite, his perception of beauty keen."—*F. H. Underwood*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The rising moon has hid the stars;  
Her level rays, like golden bars,  
Lie on the landscape green,  
With shadows brown between.

"And silver-white the river gleams,  
As if Diana, in her dreams,  
Had dropt her silver bow  
Upon the meadows low."—*Endymion*.

"Beautiful was the night. Behind the black wall of the forest,  
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon. On the river  
Fell here and there through the branches a tremulous gleam  
of the moonlight,  
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a darkened and devious  
spirit."—*Evangeline*.

“ There is a quiet spirit in these woods,  
 That dwells where'er the gentle south-wind blows ;  
 Where, underneath the white-thorn, in the glade,  
 The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,  
 The leaves above their sunny palms outspread.  
 With what a tender and impassioned voice  
 It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,  
 When the fast ushering star of morning comes  
 O'er-riding the gray hills with golden scarf ;  
 Or when the cowed and dusky-sandaed Eve,  
 In mourning weeds, from out the western gate,  
 Departs with silent pace ! That spirit moves  
 In the green valley, where the silver brook,  
 From its full laver, pours the white cascade ;  
 And babbling low amid the tangled woods,  
 Slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter.”  
 —*The Spirit of Poetry.*

**3. Humanity—Sympathy—Tenderness.**—“ Owing to the tenderness seldom absent from his work, Longfellow has often been called the poet of the affections. . . . With his age his tenderness grew upon him, as men's traits will for good or bad.”—*E. C. Stedman.*

“ The humanities, to adopt a phrase, were never long absent from Mr. Longfellow's thoughts. We feel their presence in ‘The Old Clock on the Stairs,’ in ‘The Bridge,’ etc.”  
 —*R. H. Stoddard.*

“ Does it make a man worse that his character's such  
 As to make his friends love him (as you think) too much ?  
 Why, there's not a bard at this moment alive  
 More willing than he that his fellows should thrive ;  
 While you are abusing him thus even now  
 He would help either one of you out of a slough.”

—*Lowell.*

“ Each of his most noted poems is the song of a feeling common to every mind in moods into which every mind is liable to fall. . . . There is a humanity in them which

is irresistible in the fit measures to which they are wedded.  
 . . . He is the poet of the household, of the fireside, of the universal home feeling. The infinite tenderness and patience, the pathos, and the beauty of daily life, of familiar emotion, and the common scene—these are the significance of that verse whose beautiful and simple melody, softly murmuring for more than forty years, made the singer the most beloved of living men.”—*George William Curtis*.

“Longfellow is wellnigh universal in his sympathies, and so is the beloved of all men.”—*F. H. Underwood*.

“Longfellow wrote for humanity, and humanity recognized its own hopes and feelings in the plain aphoristic patience and cheer of ‘The Psalm of Life.’”—*C. F. Richardson*.

“He comes as the poet of melody, courtesy, deference, . . . poet of all sympathetic gentleness and universal poet of women and young people.”—*Walt Whitman*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“O little feet ! that such long years  
 Must wander on through hopes and fears,  
 Must ache and bleed beneath your load ;  
 I, nearer to the wayside inn  
 Where toil may cease and rest begin,  
 Am weary, thinking of your load !”—*Weariness*.

“Thou unknown hero, sleeping by the sea  
 In thy forgotten grave ! with secret shame  
 I feel my pulses beat, my forehead burn,  
 When I remember thou hast given for me  
 All that thou hadst, thy life, thy very name,  
 And I can give thee nothing in return.”  
 —*A Nameless Grave*.

“ ‘ My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,’  
 The Reaper said, and smiled ;  
 ‘ Dear tokens of the earth are they,  
 Where he was once a child.

" They shall all bloom in fields of light,  
 Transplanted by my care,  
 And saints, upon their garments white,  
 These sacred blossoms wear."

" And the mother gave, in tears and pain,  
 The flowers she most did love ;  
 She knew she would find them all again  
 In the fields of light above."

—*The Reaper and the Flowers.*

4. **Sentiment—Grace—Mildness.** — " Longfellow is our poet of grace and sentiment. Scores of followers have caught a manner which shows to advantage when transferred ; but his position for years at the head of even a sentimental school, shows that Longfellow was not without a genius of his own. . . . Superlative joy and woe alike were foreign to the verse of Longfellow. It came neither from the heights nor out of the depths but along the even tenor of a fortunate life. . . . So far as comfort, virtue, domestic tenderness, and freedom from extreme of passion and incident are characteristics of the middle classes, he has been their minstrel. . . . 'The cry of the human' did not haunt his ear. When he avails himself of a piteous situation he does so as tranquilly as the nuns who broider on tapestry the torments of the doomed in hell. . . . There is something exasperating to serious minds in his placid waiver of the grievous or the distasteful. . . . From the first he was a poet of sentiment. . . . His worldly wisdom was of the gospel kind, so gently tempered as to do no evil. . . . Next above these pretty homilies are his poems of sentiment and twilight broodings. 'The Reaper and the Flowers,' 'Footsteps of Angels,' etc., come home to pensive and gentle natures."—*E. C. Steadman.*

" The secret of his youthful devotion to his art does not lie wholly in his intellectual range and richness ; it springs also

from the universality of his sentiment—we use the word in its pure and dignified sense—in a wide, diffused glow, which does not rise to the heat and blaze of passion, and is so much the more permanent.”—*Bayard Taylor*.

“Morality to Emerson was the very breath of existence ; to Longfellow it was a sentiment.”—*E. S. Robertson*.

“It was customary to say that his poetry was sentimental. So it was ; but the sentiment was healthy, sweet, and true. . . . It was the sentiment which fills with most the place of reasoning, with some is the substitute for faith ; a sentiment tender, humane, devout, trusting, submissive, but manly, touching all objects with romantic charm, associating the lowest with some human interest, connecting the highest with the mysteriousness of Providence and the unchanging benignity of God.”—*O. B. Frothingham*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“As a fond mother, when the day is o’er,  
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,  
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,  
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,  
Still gazing at them through the open door,  
Nor wholly reassured and comforted  
By promises of others in their stead,  
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more ;  
So Nature deals with us, and takes away  
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand  
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go  
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,  
Being too full of sleep to understand  
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.”

—*Nature*.

“The birds sang in the branches,  
With sweet, familiar tone ;  
But the voices of the children  
Will be heard in dreams alone.

" And the boy that walked beside me,  
He could not understand  
Why closer in mine, ah ! closer,  
I pressed his warm, soft hand."

—*The Open Window.*

" The shadow of the linden-trees  
Lay moving on the grass ;  
Between them and the moving boughs,  
A shadow, thou didst pass.

" Thy dress was like the lilies,  
And thy heart as pure as they ;  
One of God's holy messengers  
Did walk with me that day.

" I saw the branches of the trees  
Bend down thy touch to meet,  
The clover-blossoms in the grass  
Rise up to kiss thy feet."—*A Gleam of Sunshine.*

**5. Revery—Repose.**—"His life and works together were an edifice fairly built—the 'House Beautiful,' whose air is peace, where repose and calm are ministrant, where the raven's croak, symbol of the unrest of a more perturbed genius, is never heard. . . . Heine's rhythm and revery were repeated in 'The Day Is Done,' 'The Bridge,' 'Twilight,' etc., but not his passion and scorn. . . . Neither war nor grief ever too much disturbed his artist-soul. Tragedy went no deeper with him than its pathos ; it was another element of the beautiful. Death was a luminous transition."  
—*E. C. Stedman.*

"He has little of the unrest and frenzy of the bard. . . . An air of repose, of quiet power, is around his compositions."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"That calm sweetness of spirit, which was so apparent in Longfellow, was an acquisition as well as an endowment."  
—*Horace E. Scudder.*

"Mr. Longfellow's instrument is not the trumpet but the flute. He does not so much stir as assure and soothe—more lullaby than appeal. He croons a cradle-song to this great humanity, still a child, tired and worn on its way. He gives the peace it implores."—*C. A. Bartol.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" I see the lights of the village  
Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me  
That my soul cannot resist ;

" A feeling of sadness and longing,  
That is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles the rain."

—*The Day Is Done.*

" From the garden just below  
Little puffs of perfume blow,  
And a sound is in his ears  
Of the murmur of the bees  
In the shining chestnut trees ;  
Nothing else he heeds or hears.  
All the landscape seems to swoon  
In the happy afternoon ;  
Slowly o'er his senses creep  
The encroaching waves of sleep,  
And he sinks as sank the town,  
Unresisting, fathoms down,  
Into caverns cool and deep !"—*Amalfi.*

" This is the place. Stand still, my steed,  
Let me review the scene,  
And summon from the shadowy Past  
The forms that once have been.



"The Past and Present here unite  
Beneath Time's flowing tide,  
Like footprints hidden by a brook  
But seen on either side."

—*A Gleam of Sunshine.*

**6. Bookishness—Erudition.**—Of all our great American poets, Longfellow has drawn most from books and least directly from nature.

"The bookish flavor of his work is at once its strength and its weakness. . . . In reading Longfellow we see that the world of books was to him a real world. From first to last, if he had been banished from his library, his imagination would have been blind and deaf and silent. It is true that he fed upon the choicest yield of literature ; his gathered honey was of the thyme and clover, not of the rude buckwheat. . . . He had a bookishness as assimilative as that of Hunt or Lamb. . . . In 'Evangeline' there are refined pictures of scenery that was familiar to him with just as pleasing descriptions of that which he knew only through his books."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"Even when dealing expressly with American subjects, his mind was so stored with the abundance of a matured civilization that he was constantly, by reference and allusion, carrying the reader on a voyage to Europe."—*Horace E. Scudder.*

"Among the minor defects of the play ['The Spanish Student'] we may mention the frequent allusion to book incidents not generally known and requiring each a note by way of explanation. The drama demands that everything be so instantaneously evident that he who runs may read ; and the only impression effected by these notes to a play is that the author is desirous of showing his reading."—*Edgar A. Poe.*

"Longfellow has enjoyed every advantage that culture can give, and his knowledge of many nations and many languages undoubtedly has given breadth to his mind and opened to him ever new sources of poetic interest."—*E. P. Whipple.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ As ancient Priam at the Scæan gate  
 Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state  
 With the old men, too old and weak to fight,  
 Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight  
 To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,  
 Of Trojans and Achæians in the field ;  
 So from the snowy summits of our years  
 We see you in the plain, as each appears,  
 And question of you ; asking, ‘ Who is he  
 That towers above the others ? Which may be  
 Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,  
 Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus ? ’ ”

—*Morituri Salutamur.*

“ Some legend written by Judah Rav  
 In his Gemara of Babylon ;  
 Or something from the Gulistan—  
 The tale of the Cazy of Hamadan,  
 Or of that king of Khorasan  
 Who saw in dreams the eyes of one  
 That had a hundred years been dead.”

—*Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

“ Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms filled my  
 brain ;

They who live in history only seemed to walk the earth again ;

“ All the Foresters of Flanders,—mighty Baldwin Bras de Fer,  
 Lyderick du Bucq and Cressy Philip, Guy de Dampierre.

“ I beheld the pageants splendid that adorned those days of  
 old ;

Stately dames like queens attended, knights who bore the  
 Fleece of Gold ;

“ Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden argosies ;  
 Ministers from twenty nations ; more than royal pomp and  
 ease.”—*The Belfry of Bruges.*

**7. Imitation—Assimilation.**—While Longfellow has been generally acquitted of the moral guilt implied in Poe's famous article entitled "Mr. Longfellow and other Plagiarists," even his warmest admirers are forced to admit that he has repeatedly, if unconsciously, assimilated the ideas and even the forms of other poets.

"It must be acknowledged, at the outset, that few poets of his standing have profited more openly by examples that suited their taste and purpose. . . . Like greater bards before him, he was a good borrower. . . . Given a task which he liked—with a pattern supplied by another—and few could equal him. . . . The poet's matter, if often gleaned from foreign literature, was novel to his readers, and the style distinct from that of any English contemporary. . . . But if there was nothing of the Grecian in him, there was much of the Latinist, and with Virgil's polished muse he might have been quite at ease. . . . The superb apostrophe to the Union [at the close of "The Building of the Ship"] outvies that ode of Horace on which it is modelled." —*E. C. Stedman.*

"Even when treating of distinctly American subjects, . . . he borrowed his expressions from traditions of English poetry. . . . There are repeated instances of entirely second-hand reflections of scenes which were impossible to his eye. . . . Even when dealing with a slight historic fact, as in the 'Hymn to the Moravian Nuns of Bethlehem,' he translated the entire incident into terms of foreign import. . . . It would not be difficult for one, running through the entire body of the poems, to find in those relating to foreign subjects a constant indirect reference to existing literary materials. Not only so, but in such poems as 'The Courtship of Miles Standish' and 'Evangeline,' the scaffolding which the poet put up could easily be put up by the historical student; in the 'Tales of a Wayside Inn' only one is in any peculiar sense the poet's invention; while 'Hia-

watha' is Schoolcraft translated into poetry."—*Horace E. Scudder.*

"Throughout 'The Spanish Student,' as well as throughout other compositions of its author, there runs a very obvious vein of imitation. We are perpetually reminded of something we have seen before—some old acquaintance in manner or matter; and even where the similarity cannot be said to amount to plagiarism, it is still injurious to the poet in the good opinion of him who reads. . . . Much as we admire the genius of Mr. Longfellow, we are fully sensible to his many errors of affectation and imitation."—*Edgar A. Poe.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"So the Hexameter, rising and singing, with cadence sonorous,  
Falls; and in reflux rhythm back the Pentameter flows."  
—*Elegiac Verse.*

Compare Coleridge's

"In the hexameter rises the fountain's silvery column;  
In the pentameter aye falling in melody back."

"Look then into thy heart, and write!"  
—*Voices of the Night.*

Compare Sydney's

"Fool, said my muse to me, look in thy heart and write."

"Oh, what a glory doth this world put on  
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth  
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks  
On duties well performed and days well spent!  
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,  
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.  
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that death  
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go  
To his long resting-place without a tear."—*Autumn.*

Compare with the following from Bryant's "Thanatopsis," written when Longfellow was only four years old.

" To him who in the love of nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language ;

" Go forth under the open sky, and list  
To nature's teachings, while from all around—  
Earth and her waters and the depths of air—  
Comes a still voice :—

" Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him  
And lies down to pleasant dreams."

### 8. Stock Morality—Commonplace—Didacticism.

"A cheerful acceptance of the lessons of life was the moral, suggested in many lyrics, which commended him to all virtuous, home-keeping folk, but in the end poorly served him with the critics. He gained a foothold by his least poetic work—verse whose easy lessons are adjusted to common needs; little sermons in rhyme that are sure to catch the ear and to become hackneyed as a sidewalk song. He often taught, by choice, the primary class; and the upper form is slow to forget it. . . . As a moralist no one could make the commonplace more attractive. . . . Simple, even elementary it [his poetry] manifestly is, despite the learning which he puts to use."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"The morality of the 'Psalm of Life' is commonplace. If versified by a poetaster, it would inspire no deep feeling and strengthen no high purposes. But the worn axioms of didactic verse have the breath of a new life breathed into them when they are touched by genius. We are made to love and follow what before we merely assented to with a lazy acquiescence. . . . It would be easy to say much of Longfellow's singular felicity in addressing the moral nature of man. It has been said of him, sometimes in derision, that all his

poems have a moral. There is doubtless a tendency in his mind to evolve some useful meaning from his finest imaginations and to preach when he should only sing ; but we still think that the moral of his compositions is not thrust intrusively forward, but rather flows naturally from the subject. . . . He inculcates with much force that poetic stoicism which teaches us to reckon earthly evils at their true worth and to endure with patience what results inevitably from our condition."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Even in spite of this friendliness and affection which Longfellow wins, I can see, of course, that he does moralize too much. The first part of his lyrics is always the best ; the part where he is dealing with the subject. Then comes the 'practical application' as preachers say, and I feel somehow that that is sometimes uncalled for, disenchanting, and even manufactured."—*Andrew Lang*.

"His didactics are all out of place. . . . We do not mean to say that a didactic moral may not be well made the undercurrent of a poetic thesis ; but that it can never be well put so obtrusively forth as in the majority of his compositions. . . . It will be at once evident . . . that he regards the inculcation of a moral as essential. . . . Didacticism is the prevalent tone of his song. His invention, his imagery, his all, is made subservient to the elucidation of one or more points, . . . which he looks upon as truth."—*Edgar A. Poe*.

"Shall we think less of our poet because he aimed in his verse not merely to please, but also to impress some elevating thought in the minds of his readers? . . . No poet knows better than Longfellow how to impress a moral without seeming to preach."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,  
 For the lesson thou hast taught !  
 Thus at the flaming forge of life  
 Our fortunes must be wrought ;  
 Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
 Each burning deed and thought.”

— *The Village Blacksmith.*

“ Big words do not smite like war-clubs,  
 Boastful breath is not a bow-string—  
 Taunts are not so sharp as arrows,  
 Deeds are better things than words are,  
 Actions mightier than boastings.”— *Hiawatha.*

“ And thou, too, whosoe’er thou art,  
 That readest this brief psalm,  
 As one by one thy hopes depart,  
 Be resolute and calm.

“ Oh, fear not in a world like this,  
 And thou shalt know ere long—  
 Know how sublime a thing it is  
 To suffer and be strong.”— *The Light of Stars.*

**9. Flexibility — Variety — Lyric Power.** — “ His command of many meters, each adapted to his special subject, shows also how artistically he uses sound to reënforce vision, and satisfy the ear while pleasing the eye.

“ ‘ When descends on the Atlantic  
 The gigantic  
 Storm-wind of the equinox,  
 Landward in his wrath he scourges  
 The toiling surges,  
 Laden with sea-weed from the rocks.’

The ear least skilled to detect the harmonies of verse feels the obvious effect of lines like these. In his long poems . . . Longfellow never repeats himself. He occupies a new domain

of poetry with each successive poem, and always gives the public the delightful shock of a new surprise."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"His verse has grace, melody, and variety that leave no room for criticism. . . . It must be admitted that there is not to be found in the work of any other poet such variety, both as regards themes and treatment, as in the cycle of Longfellow's poems. . . . We are struck by the variety and fitness of the metrical forms. . . . Hardly any poetry of our age has produced so many styles of effective rhythm. . . . He employed successfully nearly all the rhythmic forms of which the language is capable, except blank verse."—*F. H. Underwood*.

"With Longfellow's faculty of putting a story into rippling verse almost as lightly as another would tell it in prose, we find ourselves assured of as many poems as he had themes. . . . He combined beauty with feeling in lyrical trifles which rival those of Tennyson and other masters of technique, and was almost our earliest maker of verse that might be termed exquisite. . . . Longfellow, employing regular forms of verse, was flexible where many are awkward."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Although Longfellow was not fond of metrical contortions and acrobatic achievements, he well knew the effect of skilful variation in the forms of verse and well-managed refrains or repetitions. . . . Nothing lasts like a coin or a lyric. . . . I think we may venture to say that some of the shorter poems of Longfellow must surely reach a remote posterity and be considered then, as now, ornaments to English literature. We may compare them with the best short poems of the language without fearing that they will suffer."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"Our vain desire  
Aches for the voice we loved so long to hear  
In Dorian flute-notes breathing soft and clear—  
The sweet contralto that could never tire."

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.



"The melody of this versification is very remarkable : some of his stanzas sound with the richest and sweetest music of which language is capable."—*C. C. Felton*.

"His works are graceful, tender, pensive, gentle, melodious—the strain of a troubadour."—*George William Curtis*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The ocean old,  
Centuries old,  
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,  
Paces restless to and fro,  
 Up and down the sands of gold.  
 His beating heart is not at rest ;  
 And far and wide,  
 With ceaseless flow,  
 His beard of snow  
 Heaves with the heaving of his breast."

—*The Building of the Ship*.

"Out of the bosom of the Air,  
 Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,  
 Over the woodlands brown and bare,  
 Over the harvest-fields forsaken,  
 Silent and soft and slow  
 Descends the snow.

"Even as our cloudy fancies take  
 Suddenly shape in some divine expression,  
 Even as the troubled heart doth make  
 In the white countenance confession,  
 The troubled sky reveals  
 The grief it feels."—*Snow-Flakes*.

"This song of mine  
 Is a Song of the Vine  
To be sung by the glowing embers  
Of wayside inns,  
 When the rain begins  
 To darken the drear Novembers."

—*Catawba Wine*.

**10. Narrative Power.**—"He was the first American to compose sustained narrative poems that gained and kept a place in literature. . . . Longfellow again and again received his crown of praise ; and this . . . in return for the service in which he was easily first—the art which gained for an old-time minstrel a willing largess, that of the raconteur, the teller of bewitching tales. . . . This was due to a modern and natural style, to the sweet variety of his measures, and to his ease in dialogue. His frequent gayety and constant sense of the humanities made him a true story-teller for the multitude."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Mr. Longfellow's method of telling a story will compare favorably . . . with any of the recognized masters of English narrative verse from Chaucer down. . . . He has more than held his own against all English-writing poets, and in no walk of poetry so positively as that of telling a story. In an age of story-tellers, he stands at their head, not only in the poems I have mentioned, but also in the lesser stories included in his 'Tales of a Wayside Inn.' "—*R. H. Stoddard*.

"Longfellow's power of picturing to the eye and the soul a scene, a place, an event, a person, is almost unrivalled."—*E. P. Whipple*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

- " And King Olaf heard the cry,  
Saw the red light in the sky,  
Laid his hand upon his sword,  
As he leaned upon the railing,  
And his ships went sailing, sailing,  
Northward into Drontheim fiord.
- " There he stood as one who dreamed ;  
And the red light glanced and gleamed  
On the armor that he wore ;  
And he shouted, as the rifted  
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted:  
' I accept thy challenge, Thor.' "

—*The Saga of King Olaf*.

"Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of Indians  
Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,  
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their bow-  
strings,

Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of the  
ambush.

But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and treated them  
smoothly."—*The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

"In a great castle near Valladolid,  
Moated and high and by fair woodlands hid,  
There dwelt, as from the chronicles we learn,  
An old Hidalgo, proud and taciturn,  
Whose name has perished with his towers of stone,  
And all his actions save this one alone."

—*Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

## II. Profuse, Sometimes Labored, Imagery.—

"Every thing suggested an image except when his imagery  
suggested the thought of which he made it seem the reflection.

. . . He hunts about for some emotion or the phase of  
life which these things aptly illustrate. This process not sel-  
dom becomes a vice of style. He constantly applied his im-  
agery in a formal way. . . . But whether his metaphors  
came of themselves or with prayer and fasting, they always  
came, and often were novel and poetic."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Not only was his poetry itself instinct with artistic power,  
but his appropriating genius drew within the circle of his  
art a great variety of illustration and suggestion from the  
other arts. . . . He had a catholic taste, and his rich  
decoration of simple themes was the most persuasive agency at  
work in familiarizing Americans with the treasures of art and  
legend in the old world."—*Horace E. Scudder*.

"The literary decoration of his style, the aroma and color  
and richness, so to speak, which it derives from his ample ac-  
complishments in literature, are incomparable. His verse is  
embroidered with allusion and names and illustrations wrought  
with a taste so true and a skill so rare that the robe, though it

be cloth of gold, is as finely flexible as linen, and still beautifully reveals, not conceals, the living form."—*George William Curtis*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet and yellow,  
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering tree of the  
forest  
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned with mantles  
and jewels."—*Evangeline*.

" And as she gazed from the window, she saw serenely the moon  
pass  
Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star follow her foot-  
steps,  
As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wandered with  
Hagar.

" Bright rose the sun next day; and all the flowers of the garden  
Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and anointed his  
tresses  
With the delicious balm that they bore in their vases of  
crystal."—*Evangeline*.

" For now the western skies  
Are red with sunset, and gray mists arise  
Like damps that gather on a dead man's face."  
—*Three Friends of Mine*.

" How slowly through the lilac-scented air  
Descends the tranquil moon ! Like thistle-down  
The vapory clouds float in the peaceful sky."  
—*The Spanish Student*.

**12. Occasional Vigor.**—While Longfellow's poetry, as a whole, cannot be called vigorous, there are a few marked exceptions. In speaking of the "Skeleton in Armor" Stedman says: "To old-fashioned people, this heroic ballad, written over forty years ago, is worth a year's product of what I may term Kensington-stitch verse."

"There is much of the old Norse energy in this composition

["The Skeleton in Armor"]—that rough, ravenous battle-spirit, which for a time makes the reader's blood rush and tingle in warlike sympathy."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"The Wreck of the Hesperus' is deservedly admired, especially for the vigor of its descriptions. . . . The ballad of 'Sir Humphrey Gilbert' . . . is full of the ancient vigor, such as it was when the language was new, and custom had not worn off the sharp edges of words."—*F. H. Underwood*.

"You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse,  
But remember that elegance also is force;  
After polishing granite as much as you will,  
The heart keeps its tough old persistency still."—*Lowell*.

"Whenever Mr. Longfellow's translation [of Dante] is kept free from oddities of diction and construction, it is very animated and vigorous."—*John Fiske*.

"The poem ['Hymn of the Moravian Nuns'] . . . has a native fire and an enthusiasm kindled by the thought of personal sacrifice in a great cause. So, too, in the 'Burial of the Minnisink' . . . the poetic passion flames forth in a single bold phrase at the end of the poem."—*Horace E. Scudder*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped on the floor,  
till his armor  
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound of sinister  
omen.

"Wildly he shouted, and loud: 'John Alden! you have betrayed me!

Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have supplanted, defrauded,  
betrayed me!

One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart of Wat  
Tyler;

Who shall prevent me from running my own through the heart  
of a traitor?"—*The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

" Silent a moment they stood, in speechless wonder, and then  
rose

Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,  
And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the door-  
way.

Vain was the hope of escape ; and cries and fierce impreca-  
tions

Rang through the house of prayer ; and high o'er the heads of  
the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the black-  
smith,

As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with passion ; and wildly he  
shouted—

' Down with the tyrants of England ! We never have sworn  
them allegiance !

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our homes and  
our harvests ! ' "—*Evangeline*.

" " And as to catch the gale  
Round veered the flapping sail,  
Death ! was the helmsman's hail,  
Death without quarter !  
Midships with iron keel  
Struck we her ribs of steel ;  
Down her black hulk did reel  
Through the black water !

" " As with his wings aslant,  
Sails the fierce cormorant,  
Seeking some rocky haunt,  
With his prey laden ;  
So toward the open main,  
Beating to sea again,  
Through the wild hurricane  
Bore I the maiden.' "

—*The Skeleton in Armor*.

**13. Mild Religious Earnestness—Trust—Opti-  
mism.**—" Through all the romantic grace and elegance of the

'Voices of the Night' and 'Hyperion,' there is a moral earnestness which is even more remarkable in the poems than in the romance. . . . The 'Psalm of Life' was the very heart-beat of the American conscience, and the 'Footsteps of Angels' was a hymn of the fond yearning of every human heart. . . . It is the moral purity of his verse which at once charms the heart, and in his first most famous poem, the 'Psalm of Life,' it is the direct inculcation of a moral purpose."—*George William Curtis.*

"He never sounds a note of despair; doubt never sweeps darkly across his soul. . . . You who have ceased to believe in the progress of right and the victory of good may be recalled to a healthier and nobler view by the indomitable hopefulness and deep trust to be found in the utterances of Longfellow."—*H. R. Haweis.*

"It [his poetry] is the gospel of good-will set to music. It has carried sweetness and light to thousands of homes. It is blended with our holiest affections and our immortal hopes."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"The great characteristic of Longfellow—that of addressing the moral nature through the imagination, of linking moral truth to intellectual beauty—is a far greater excellence. . . . A person, in reading the 'Psalm of Life,' does not say that this poem 'is distinguished for nicety of epithet and elaborate, scholarly finish;' but rather, 'this poem touches the heroic string of my nature, breathes energy into my heart, sustains my lagging purposes, and fixes my thoughts on what is stable and eternal.'"—*E. P. Whipple.*

"A religious trust breathes through all his books, the spirit of faith. . . . In a doubting or half-believing age, there is no query of the primal truths of God and heaven on his page."—*C. A. Bartol.*

"As long as the heart of humanity shall beat, his voice will be heard in tones of music, singing words of consolation and hope."—*R. H. Stoddard.*

“It [“*Evangeline*”] is a psalm of love and forgiveness ; the gentleness and peace of Christian meekness and forbearance breathe through it.”—*Whittier*.

“His heart was pure, his purpose high,  
His thoughts serene, his patience vast.  
He put all strifes of passion by  
And lived to God from first to last.”

—*William Winter*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Then shall the good stand in immortal bloom,  
In the fair gardens of that second birth ;  
And each bright blossom mingle its perfume  
With that of flowers which never bloomed on earth.”  
—*God's Acre*.

“Then pealed the bells more loud and deep :  
‘God is not dead ; nor doth he sleep !  
The Wrong shall fail,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good will to men.’”  
—*Christmas Bells*.

“Let us be patient ! These severe afflictions  
Not from the ground arise,  
But oftentimes celestial benedictions  
Assume this dark disguise.

“We see but dimly through the mists and vapors ;  
Amid these earthly damps  
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers  
May be heaven's distant lamps.”—*Resignation*.

✓ **14. Simplicity—Naturalness.**—“In respect of this simplicity and naturalness, his style is in strong contrast with that of many writers of our time. There is no straining for effect, there is no torturing of rhythm for novel patterns, no wearisome iteration of petted words, no inelegant clipping of



syllables to meet the exigencies of a verse, no affected archaisms, rarely any liberty taken with language—unless it may be in the form of a few words in the translation of Dante.”  
—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

“He was no word-monger, no winder of coil upon coil about a subtle theme. . . . He used his culture not to veil the word, but to make it clear. He drew upon it for the people in a manner which they could relish and comprehend.”  
—*E. C. Stedman.*

“The clear thought, the true feeling, the pure aspiration, is expressed with limpid simplicity. . . . His poems are apples of gold in pictures of silver. There is nothing in them excessive, nothing overwrought, nothing strained into turgidity, obscurity, and nonsense. There is sometimes, indeed, a fine stateliness, as in the ‘Arsenal at Springfield,’ and even a resounding splendor of diction, as in ‘Sandalphon.’ But when the melody is most delicate it is simple. The poet throws nothing into the mist to make it large. How purely melodious his verse can be without losing the thought or its most transparent expression, is seen in ‘The Evening Star’ and ‘Snow-Flakes.’ ”—*George William Curtis.*

“His thought, though often deep, was never obscure. His lyrics . . . have a singing simplicity. . . . This simplicity was the result of rare, artistic repression ; it was not due to any poverty of intellect.”—*Brander Matthews.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“The twilight is sad and cloudy,  
The wind blows wild and free,  
And like the wings of sea-birds  
Flash the white caps of the sea.

“But in the fisherman’s cottage  
There shines a ruddier light,  
And a little face at the window  
Peers out into the night.

"Close, close it is pressed to the window,  
As if those childish eyes  
Were looking into the darkness  
To see some form arise."—*Twilight.*

"He goes on Sunday to the church,  
And sits among his boys ;  
He hears the parson pray and preach,  
He hears his daughter's voice  
Singing in the village choir,  
And it makes his heart rejoice.

"It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
Singing in Paradise !  
He needs must think of her once more,  
How in the grave she lies ;  
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes  
A tear out of his eyes."

—*The Village Blacksmith.*

"On sunny slope and beechen swell,  
The shadowed light of evening fell ;  
And, where the maple's leaf was brown,  
With soft and silent lapse came down  
The glory that the wood receives,  
At sunset, on its golden leaves.

"Far upward in the mellow light  
Rose the blue hills. One cloud of white  
Around a far uplifted cone,  
In the warm blush of evening shone ;  
An image of the silver lakes,  
By which the Indian's soul awakes."

—*Burial of the Minnisink.*

## BROWNING, 1812-1889

**Biographical Outline.**—Robert Browning, born May 7, 1812, at Camberwell, London ; father a clerk in the Bank of England and a man of fine literary taste ; mother “ a Scottish gentlewoman ” descended from German stock ; Browning is a precocious child of great activity and fiery temper ; he enters a private school in infancy, makes verses before he can write, and so excels older children in his studies as to cause maternal jealousy ; later he enters the private school of the Rev. Thomas Ready, where he remains till he is fourteen ; he is passionately devoted to his mother, who gives him a careful biblical training ; he manifests also an early fondness for animal pets ; he exhibits, as a boy, contempt for the educational methods of his school and for the stupidity of his school-fellows, although he writes plays and compels the other boys to act them ; his father is a great reader, and the house is “ literally crammed with books ; ” Browning reads omnivorously, preferring history and literature, and early develops a fondness for rare books and first editions ; he becomes especially interested in the writers of the Elizabethan school and in Byron ; at the age of twelve he writes a “ volume ” of poems showing strong traces of Byron’s influence, and calls it “ *Incondita* ; ” his father seeks in vain for a publisher of this volume, and the original was probably destroyed by Browning, although a copy made by a friend of his mother was extant till 1871, when Browning destroyed it ; “ *Incondita* ” was read by the Rev. W. J. Fox, who afterward became Browning’s literary adviser and patron ; the copy so long preserved in manuscript was made by Miss Flower, a musician of rare merit, who afterward wrote the hymn “ *Nearer, My God, to*

Thee ;" Browning was deeply devoted to her, and she is supposed to have inspired his "Pauline ;" in 1826 he accidentally picks up "Mr. Shelley's atheistical poem," as the book-stall advertisement called it ; soon afterward he obtains most of Shelley's writings and three volumes of Keats's, although the local booksellers then hardly knew these poets' names ; Shelley and Keats came to Browning, as he said, "like two nightingales singing together in a May night," and they had an important influence on the development of his genius ; he long regarded Shelley as the greatest poet of his age, if not of any age ; for two years after reading "Queen Mab" Browning becomes "a professing atheist and a practising vegetarian," and he returns to a natural diet only when he sees that his eyes are becoming weakened by his abstention ; his "atheism" soon cured itself.

As Browning's father is himself a scholar, he determines to educate the boy at home, where he learns music, dancing, riding, boxing, and fencing, and excels in the last three accomplishments ; in music he makes such advancement as to write the airs for the songs he sung, and he remained all his life a fine musical critic ; he afterward destroyed his boyish musical compositions ; during his fourteenth and fifteenth years he acquires a good knowledge of the French language and literature under a native tutor, and in his eighteenth year he attends, for a term or two, a Greek class at the University of London ; he seems to have entirely neglected mathematics, logic, and the other branches that train the thinking powers—studies that were "doubly requisite for a nature in which the creative imagination was predominant over all the other mental faculties ;" this omission doubtless accounts in great part for the unfortunate involutions and inversions of his style ; during his later teens his restlessness and aggressiveness became intense, and he "gratuitously proclaimed himself everything that he was and some things that he was not ;" one of his dearest friends at this period was Alfred Domett, whom

Browning afterward immortalized in "Waring" and also in "The Guarding Angel;" another was James Silverthorne, a cousin on the mother's side, who is the youth referred to in "May and Death;" although Browning took a deep interest in art and artists, his choice of poetry as a profession was "a foregone conclusion;" his early art-work was confined to modelling; his father's suggestion that he study law was promptly rejected, as was a virtual offer of a position in the Bank of England; he was never a regular churchgoer, but was always very fond of the drama, often in youth walking from Richmond to London to hear Edmund Kean.

Browning was generously supported in his poetical work by his father, who bore the entire expense of publishing "Paracelsus," "Sordello," and "Bells and Pomegranates"—poems that brought no financial return to their author; as a preliminary to his life-work in literature, Browning carefully digests the whole of Johnson's Dictionary; in 1833, when he is but twenty, he writes "Pauline," which is published anonymously, the expense being borne by an aunt; this poem is favorably reviewed by Browning's friend Fox in his *Monthly Repository*, while another critic calls it "a piece of pure bewilderment;" in the winter of 1833-34 Browning visits St. Petersburg as the secretary and guest of his friend Benckhausen, then the Russian Consul-General at London; on his return he applies for a position connected with a proposed mission to Persia, but is unsuccessful; from 1834 to 1836 he contributes to the *Monthly Repository* five poems, of which the first is now extant only in his "Personalalia," while the other four were afterward incorporated, respectively, into "Pippa Passes," "Bells and Pomegranates," and "James Lee's Wife;" Browning completes "Paracelsus" in March, 1835, and, with Fox's aid, finds a publisher; the theme of "Paracelsus" was suggested to Browning by Count Ripart Monclar ("Amédée"), a warm friend of his, who was then in London acting as the private agent of the royal French exiles then sojourning in

England ; "Paracelsus" is called "rubbish" by a critic in the *Athenæum*, but is warmly defended by John Forster in the *Examiner*—a service that results in the formation of a lasting friendship between Browning and Forster ; about 1835 the poet's father removes from Camberwell to a house in Hatcham, where he finds more room for his library of 6,000 volumes, and where Browning makes a pet of a garden toad, immortalized in one of the poems of "Asolando ;" soon after the removal to Hatcham Browning enters upon friendly relations with Carlyle, and makes the acquaintance of Talfourd, Horne, Leigh Hunt, Proctor, Milnes, Dickens, Wordsworth, and Landor, all of whom he meets frequently at dinner at the homes of Talfourd, Fox, and Macready ; at these dinners new plays and poems often had their first reading ; in December, 1835, Browning and Forster are entertained by Macready at his country home at Elstree, and a warm friendship exists thereafter between the actor and the poet ; while at Elstree Browning meets Miss Haworth, the "Eyebright" of "Sordello," and the friend to whom were addressed some of the best of his letters now extant ; at a dinner in Macready's house May 26, 1836, where Wordsworth, Talfourd, Landor, and Miss Mitford are present, Macready suggests to Browning the composition of a drama ; the result is his "Strafford," which was presented by Macready and his company at the Covent Garden Theatre May 1, 1837, and had a short but successful course ; it had been published during the previous April by Longman, and was the first of Browning's works for whose publication he did not pay ; at this period he is described by a friend as "just a trifle of a dandy, addicted to lemon-colored kid gloves and such things ;" he works at "Sordello" during the remainder of 1837 and, in the spring of 1838, starts on his first journey to Italy ; landing at Trieste, he visits Venice, Treviso, Bassano, Asolo, Vicenza, Padua, Verona, and then Trent, Innsprück, Munich, Salzburg, Frankfurt, Mayence, going thence down the Rhine to Cologne and

back to London by way of Aix-la-Chapelle, Liège, and Antwerp; while at Trieste he wrote "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" (in pencil on the cover of a book) and "Home Thoughts by the Sea;" the impressions received during this tour at Asolo and at Venice appeared later in "Pippa Passes" and "In a Gondola."

In 1839 Browning first meets the old boyhood school-friend of his father, Mr. Kenyon, at whose home he frequently met Wordsworth thereafter, and who was to have a peculiar relation to the Brownings' future career; in 1840 he publishes "Sordello," which was longer in preparation than any other of his poems; Browning afterward declared that in writing "Sordello" his "stress had lain on the incidents in the development of a soul, little else being, to his mind, worthy of study;" the undue condensation of thought in "Sordello," and its consequent obscurity, are due largely to a criticism made on his "Paracelsus" by John Sterling and repeated by Miss Haworth to Browning; he seems to have taken the criticism too seriously; in 1841 "Pippa Passes" appears as the first of a series of cheap pamphlets published by Moxon under the title of "Bells and Pomegranates"—a title that Browning condescended to explain in the last number as "a most familiar patristic phrase for a mixture of poetry with thought, or of faith with good works;" the other poems of Browning published under the title "Bells and Pomegranates," with their respective dates, are as follows: "King Victor and King Charles," 1842; "Dramatic Lyrics," 1842, including the "Cavalier Tunes," "Marching Along," "Give a Rouse," "Boots and Saddles," originally called "My Wife Gertrude," and "Italy and France," "Camp and Cloister," "In a Gondola," "Artemis Prologizes," "Waring," "Queen Worship," "Madhouse Cells," "Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr," and "The Pied Piper of Hamelin;" "The Return of the Druses," 1843; "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon,'" 1843; "Colombe's Birthday," 1844; "Dramatic Romances

and Lyrics," including "How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "*Pictor Ignotus*," "Italy in England," "England in Italy," "The Lost Leader," "The Lost Mistress," "Home Thoughts from Abroad," "The Tomb at St. Praxed's," "Garden Fancies," "France and Spain," "The Flight of the Duchess," "Earth's Immortalities," the song "Nay, But You Who Do Not Love Her," "The Boy and the Angel," "Night and Morning," "Claret and Tokay," "Saul," "Time's Revenges," and "The Glove;" "Luria, a Soul's Tragedy," 1846; "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon'" was written in fifteen days for Macready, who meant to play a principal part in the drama when produced; from a statement made by Browning forty years later it now appears that, owing either to Macready's jealousy or to his financial straits, the play was not fairly staged or well treated; the result was a severance of the friendship between Browning and Macready; a letter written to John Forster about this time expressing his "almost passionate admiration" for "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon,'" was withheld from Browning and from the public by Forster for thirty years; "Colombe's Birthday" was played with fair success in 1853; four of the "Dramatic Lyrics" had been published previously in the *Monthly Repository* and six of the "Dramatic Lyrics and Romances" in *Hood's Magazine*, for the sake of financial aid to Hood, then in his last illness; Browning never afterward wrote for the magazines except from philanthropic motives, as when he published "Hervé Riel" in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1870 for the benefit of the sufferers in the Franco-Prussian War; he has recorded of "Artemis Prologizes" that "it was composed much against my endeavor, while in bed with a fever;" "Christina," originally called "Queen Worship," was dedicated to the Spanish Queen; "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" and "The Cardinal and the Dog" were written to amuse Willie, the child of Macready, who was then confined to the house with illness, and who undertook to "il-



illustrate " these poems for Browning ; " *The Lost Leader* " expressed Browning's sentiments at the time about what he considered to be Wordsworth's " abandonment of liberalism at an unlucky juncture," although he afterward referred to the poem " with something of shame and contrition."

In the autumn of 1844 Browning starts again for Italy, sailing to Naples and travelling thence to Rome ; on his return from Rome he calls on Trelawney at Leghorn, and in the following year he records some reminiscences of this tour in his " *Englishman in Italy* ; " his own and his father's friend, John Kenyon, was a cousin of Elizabeth Barrett, and he had frequently spoken to the Brownings of her and had presented them with copies of her poems ; on Browning's return from Italy, in 1844, he expresses such admiration for her " *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* " that Kenyon begs him to write to the author and to express to her personally his appreciation, adding, " My cousin is a great invalid, and sees no one, but great souls jump at sympathy ; " the result is the beginning of Browning's correspondence with Miss Barrett ; after a few months, against her own inclinations, he prevails upon her to allow him to visit her, although she calls herself " only a weed, fit for the ground and darkness ; " the visit seals Browning's matrimonial fate : love succeeds to pity, and, after persistently repeating a proposition of marriage, he is accepted on the condition that she regain her health ; the two poets meet three times a week, but the visits are unknown beyond the two families and Mr. Kenyon ; late in the summer of 1846 Miss Barrett, who had partially recovered, was assured by her physician that a more complete recovery depended on her removal to a warmer climate ; her father, doubtless believing her incurable, refused to permit her to go south, and she consequently broke with him and her family and was married to Browning in strict privacy on the 12th of September, 1846, at St. Pancras Church, London, without either the knowledge or the consent of her father ; at this time Browning, though

thirty-four years of age, expressed to Miss Barrett a willingness to render himself more eligible as a husband by studying for the bar, but she insisted that he continue to devote himself to literature ; for a few days the husband and wife return, respectively, to their own homes, and on the evening of September 19th they sail secretly for Paris, by way of Havre, accompanied by Mrs. Browning's maid and her immortal dog, " Flush ; " Mrs. Browning had been healthy as a child, but had injured her spine by a fall in her thirteenth year ; Browning's family are at first much disturbed by his marriage to such an invalid, but they soon welcome her to their hearts and homes ; her own father remains unforgiving and unreconciled till his death ; in Paris the Brownings meet Mrs. Jameson, who goes with them to Genoa, whence they go, soon, to Pisa and settle there for the winter ; as Browning destroyed most of his letters to his family shortly before his death, the details of their early married life are unknown, except so far as may be gleaned from Mrs. Browning's letters to Miss Mitford, to whom she writes from Paris: " He has drawn me back to life and hope again when I had done with both."

They leave Pisa in April, 1847, for Florence, where they first spend five days with the monks of Vallombrosa, and then establish themselves in the city, where they enter into close social relations with Powers, the American sculptor ; during the winter of 1847-48 they occupy apartments in the Palazzo Pitti at Florence, just opposite the Pitti Palace ; early in 1848 Browning is severely ill, and refuses to consult a physician, but, during a chance call, Father Prout prescribes for him and restores him to health ; in the summer of 1848 the Brownings take and permanently furnish " six beautiful rooms and a kitchen " in the Guidi Palace, opposite the church of San Felice ; in July, 1848, Mrs. Browning reports herself " quite well again and strong ; " during this summer they sojourn briefly at Fano and at Ancona ; on March 9, 1849, Browning's son is born, just at the time of the sudden death

of the poet's mother, to whom he had remained passionately attached from his infancy; the shock nearly undermines his health, and, with his wife, he seeks recuperation in a tour along the coast to Spezzia and thence to the Baths of Lucca, where they remain till October; at Lucca Mrs. Browning is "able to climb the hills with Robert and help him lose himself in the forests;" they return to Florence late in the autumn of 1849, and live very quietly "retreated from the advances of the English society here;" in the summer of 1850 they visit Venice, which Mrs. Browning finds "celestial" and "ineffable," but the climate proves bad for Browning, and they remain but a few weeks; during 1850 they are on intimate terms with Margaret Fuller Ossoli, who is at their house daily till she sails on her fatal homeward voyage; in the summer of 1851 they return for the first time since their marriage to London, where Browning commemorates his marriage by kissing the paving-stones in front of St. Pancras Church; Mrs. Browning's father refuses to see either her or her child; in the autumn of 1851 they go to Paris in company with Carlyle, and settle at 138 *Avenue des Champs-Élysées*, where Carlyle frequently visits them; at this period Browning is of much service to Carlyle, as the Scotchman did not understand French; while in Paris the Brownings see much of George Sand, and have Beranger for a near neighbor; during this winter they also meet Joseph Milsand, who commends Browning's poetry in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; he afterward becomes one of Browning's warmest friends, and is a frequent visitor at the poet's apartments; the first reprint of "Sordello," in 1863, was dedicated to Milsand, as were "Parleyings with Certain People," published in 1867, within a year after Milsand's death; in December, 1848, Browning had issued new editions of "Paracelsus" and the "Bells and Pomegranates" poems; while in Florence in 1850 he wrote "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," and while at Paris, in December, 1851, his essay on Shelley, in which he justifies

that poet's life and character as he saw them then ; this essay was largely based on twenty-five supposed letters of Shelley, soon afterward discovered to be spurious.

In the summer of 1852 the Brownings return to London, and lodge at 58 Welbeck Street ; about this time the poet first comes into close relations with D. G. Rossetti, who had long been an admirer of his poetry ; during the winter of 1852-53 the Brownings are again at Florence in *Casa Guidi*, and there, early in 1853, they are rejoiced by the news that "Colombe's Birthday" has been successfully produced in London ; the summer of 1853 is passed at Lucca, where they meet Story, the American sculptor and poet, between whose family and themselves an intimate friendship exists thereafter ; while at Lucca during this summer Browning writes "In a Balcony," "By the Fireside," and some of the "Men and Women ;" he also entertains Lord Lytton there for a fortnight ; in the autumn of 1853 the Brownings make their first visit to Rome, where they lodge at 43 *Via Bocca di Leone*, in rooms secured for them by the Storys ; at Rome they meet Fanny Kemble, Thackeray, Mrs. Sartoris, and Lockhart, and Browning's portrait is painted by Fisher ; they leave Rome early in the spring of 1854, on account of the ill health of their child, and return to Florence ; they seem to have remained in Florence till the spring or early summer of 1855, when they returned again to London, taking rooms at 13 Dorset Street, Poland Square ; at these rooms, on the 27th of September, 1855, Tennyson reads his new poem "Maud" to Mrs. Browning, while Rossetti, the only other listener, makes his now famous pen-and-ink drawing of Tennyson ; in 1855 Rossetti painted Browning's portrait ; during this summer the Brownings visit Ruskin at Denmark Hill, and see his Turner pictures ; at these London rooms, in September, 1854, Browning writes "One Word More" and perhaps some of the fifty poems called "Men and Women," which he published in two volumes late in 1855 ; he goes, with his family, to Paris again

for the winter of 1855-56 ; his sister goes with them, and they all see much of Lady Elgin during the winter ; during this winter Mrs. Browning wrote " Aurora Leigh," scribbling the verses on scraps of paper wherever she happened to be, and hiding them in the folds of her dress if she was interrupted.

On the death of their mutual friend Kenyon, in December, 1856, the Brownings received from his estate, jointly, 10,000 guineas, though they received nothing from the estate of Mrs. Browning's father, who died about the same time ; during 1857 Mrs. Browning begins her regular correspondence with her husband's sister, which has since become so valuable as biographical material because of the destruction of Browning's own letters ; the winter of 1856-57 seems to have been passed at Rome and the following summer again at the Baths of Lucca, in company with Lytton ; about this time arose the well-known difference between Browning and his wife in reference to spiritualism—a kindly disagreement, which gave rise, eventually, to his poem, " Sludge, the Medium ;" in the summer of 1858 they are at Havre with Browning's sister and father ; during the winter and spring following they seem to have been at Florence and Rome ; in July, 1859, they are at or near S.ena, where the Storys are their neighbors, and where Browning becomes a kind of guardian to Walter Savage Landor, who had found life with his family at Fiesole " unendurable ;" Landor's friends in England send to Browning, annually thereafter, enough to support the old " lion," and he is placed in apartments next door to the *Casa Guidi* home in Florence, in a house kept by two former servants of the Brownings, who had married and established themselves there ; about this time the poet forms a close friendship with Leighton, the artist ; the Brownings spend the winter of 1859-60 in Rome, where he gives much time to modelling in clay ; both he and his wife are much affected at this period by the indifference of the English public to his poetry, while they are encouraged by the appreciation shown in America ; during the winter of

1859-60 he obtains, through the aid of two artist friends, a close insight into the popular and picturesque aspects of Roman life, and comes much under the influence of the Storys ; during this winter in Rome he also dines, by invitation, with the Prince of Wales, and meets Cardinal Manning ; the Brownings are again at Siena during the summer of 1860 and at Rome during the following autumn ; while in Rome at this time Mrs. Browning's health is seriously affected by the sudden death of her sister, especially as telegrams concerning her sister's illness had been intercepted by the Government because the poets were suspected of liberal tendencies ; they return to Florence late in 1861, and Mrs. Browning dies there suddenly and painlessly on June 29th of that year ; she had been suffering from a slight pulmonary weakness, but her death seems to have been directly due to the shock caused by the death of Cavour, whom she almost worshipped as the redeemer of Italy ; Browning is greatly aided at this time of trial by Miss Isa Blagden, herself an author of some note, whose beautiful home in Florence was long the centre of English society there ; he spends at her home the month following his wife's death, and then decides permanently to abandon "housekeeping," saying, "My root is taken ;" late in July, 1861, accompanied by Miss Blagden and his son, he leaves Florence for Paris, where he resides for a while at 151 *rue de Grenelle St. Germain* ; he then spends two months at St. Enogat, near Dinard, with his father and sister ; thence he goes to London, where, after a few months of boarding, he decides that the son must have a home, and so sends to Florence for his furniture, and establishes himself at a house in Warwick Crescent, near the home of his wife's sister ; he dislikes London intensely at first, and remains there only for his son's sake, always hoping eventually to return to Italy, where he wished to spend his last days ; at this period he passes his evenings with Mrs. Browning's sister, a philanthropist, for whom he writes his poem "The Twins" (republished in 1855 in "Men and Women"),

to be used in her "Plea for the Ragged Schools of London ;" he spends the summer of 1862 at Cambo and Biarritz, among the Pyrenees, where he has, as he says, "a great read at Euripides, the only book I brought with me," and where he plans "The Ring and the Book," besides writing parts of "*Dramatis Personæ*" and "In a Balcony ;" at this time he indignantly repulses several propositions by people who wish to write biographies of Mrs. Browning, and even threatens legal proceedings to prevent them from publishing her letters ; during 1863 Browning publishes a three-volume edition of his works, including "Sordello" but omitting "Pauline ;" in November, 1862, B. W. Procter and John Forster had published a volume of selections from his poems as a tribute from "two friends," in the preface of which they referred to him as "among the few great poets of the century ;" Browning repays his poet-friend Procter, during Procter's old age and complete deafness, by visiting him weekly with his son ; Browning spends the summers of 1864 and 1865 at St. Marie, near Pornic in Brittany ; his window at his Pornic lodgings becomes "the doorway" of the poem "James Lee's Wife ;" on the evening of February 12, 1864, he meets Tennyson, Gladstone, and several other eminent men at a dinner party given by Francis Palgrave in his home in Regent's Park ; during this evening Browning signs his will, making Tennyson and Palgrave witnesses to that instrument ; about this time, speaking of the neglect of himself and his works by the English public for the previous twenty-five years, Browning writes to a friend : "As I begun, so I shall end—taking my own course, pleasing myself, or aiming at doing so, and thereby, I hope, pleasing God. . . . I never did otherwise ; I never had any fear as to what I did going utterly to the bad—hence, in collected editions, I always repeated everything, smallest and greatest ;" during the winter of 1866 he again meets Carlyle ; after the death of Browning's father, on June 14, 1866, the poet's sister becomes a member of his household

and his inseparable companion ; they spend the summer of 1866 at St. Malo and LeCroisic, the scene of "Hervé Riel ;" in June, 1867, Oxford confers on Browning the degree of A.M. ("hardly given since Dr. Johnson's time, except to kings and royal personages") and in the following December he is made an honorary fellow of Balliol College ; in 1873, when the lord rectorship of St. Andrew's University becomes vacant by the death of J. S. Mill, it is tendered to Browning, but he declines the honor ; he spends the summer of 1867 again at Le Croisic ; in the summer of 1868, after visiting several French watering-places, he settles, with his family, at Audierne near Finisterre in Brittany.

In the autumn of 1868 Smith & Elder publish a six-volume edition of his works and in the following winter the first two volumes of "The Ring and the Book"—a poem that Browning always speaks of in his letters as "my murder poem ;" in the spring of 1869 the third and fourth volumes of "The Ring and the Book" appear, and at last Browning comes into his own, and is fully recognized by the English public ; the *Athenæum* called "The Ring and the Book" "the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that England has produced since the days of Shakespeare ;" the main story of the poem is founded on fact ; Browning found the tale in an old manuscript in a bookstall at Florence shortly before his wife's death, and read it carefully eight times before putting the story into verse ; he worked on the poem from 1864 to 1869 ; Pompilia, in "The Ring and the Book," reflects in many ways the character of Mrs. Browning ; from 1869 to 1871 Browning publishes nothing ; in April, 1870, he writes the sonnet "Helen's Tower," in memory of Lord Dufferin's mother—a poem published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1883 ; in the summer of 1869, with his sister and his son, he joins the Storys in a tour through Scotland ; the summer of 1870 finds them again in a fishing village of Brittany—St. Aubin, whence the exigencies of the Franco-Prussian War soon compel them to re-



turn hastily, taking a cattle-boat by night from Honfleur; in March, 1871, Browning writes "Hervé Riel," and sells it to the *Cornhill Magazine* for 100 guineas for the benefit of the French sufferers in the war; in proposing this sale, he writes to his publishers concerning "Hervé Riel," "I like it better than most things I have done of late;" in August, 1871, he publishes "Balaustion's Adventure," and in the December following "Prince Hohenstiel Schwangau," which had been written in Scotland; fourteen hundred copies of "Prince Hohenstiel Schwangau" were sold within five days after publication and before any review of the poem had appeared; twenty-five hundred copies of "Balaustion's Adventure" were sold within the first five months.

In the spring of 1872 Browning publishes, with some misgivings, "Fifine at the Fair"—a poem which his biographer later calls "a piece of perplexing cynicism, . . . froth thrown up by Browning's poetic imagination during the prolonged simmering which was to leave it clearer;" there seems to be no ground for attributing to Browning the sentiments ascribed to the hero in "Fifine at the Fair;" his real attitude toward questions of this kind is shown by the fact that he withdrew the admiration of forty years from Shelley when he learned that that poet had been heartless toward his first wife.

While at St. Aubin again, in the summer of 1872, Browning meets Anne Thackeray Ritchie, who suggests to him a title for the poem for which he was then gathering materials—"The Red Cotton Night-Cap Country;" he began this poem late in the winter of 1872, and finished it in the early autumn of 1873, just before going again to St. Aubin; for a time between 1870 and 1880 he enters into "the fashionable routine of country-house visiting," but he is most interested in the musical art, attending "every important concert of the London season" and sacrificing all other engagements to these; his frequent companion on these occasions was Mrs. Egerton-

Smith, the "A. E. S." of the poem "*La Saiziaz*," an accomplished musician, whom he had known in Italy; with her death, in 1877, he ceased to pay attention to music; in the summer of 1874, at the suggestion of Mrs. Smith, the Brownings unite with her in a joint housekeeping scheme at Mers near Fréport on the French coast; they follow the same plan in 1875 at Villers, in 1876 at the Isle of Arran, and in 1877 at a house called "*La Saiziaz*," near Geneva.

During the autumn of 1874 Browning works on "*Aristophanes' Apology*," writing at Mers and "living with the great Greek;" it is a strange fact that, with all his success in revealing the spirit of Aristophanes and Euripides, he uniformly refused to regard the great Greek writers as models of literary style; while at Villers, in 1875, he corrects the proofs of "*The Inn Album*," which is published in the following November; in the autumn of 1876 he has completed "*Pacchiarotto*;" during his later years he makes few visits except to Oxford and Cambridge, where he occasionally sojourned, especially at Balliol College, till the end of his life; at Oxford he comes into close touch with Jowett, Lord Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold; in 1875 he is unanimously nominated lord rector of the University of Glasgow, and in 1877 he is again tendered the lord rectorship of St. Andrews, but he declines both honors, perhaps because he was never inclined to public speaking; while at *La Saiziaz*, in August, 1877, he is greatly shocked by the sudden death of Mrs. Smith—"a moral thunderbolt"—and the experience finds expression in the poem "*La Saiziaz*," written soon afterward and published in the summer of 1878 with "*Two Poets of the Croisic*;" this poem best expresses Browning's "hope of immortality;" the events in "*Two Poets of the Croisic*" are strictly historical.

In August, 1878, Browning and his sister start on their long-contemplated visit to Italy; they go by way of the Splügen, and spend some time at a hotel near the summit,

where he works with unusual rapidity, writing "Ivan Ivanovitch" and several other of his "Dramatic Idylls;" they go thence to Asolo, stopping briefly at Como and Verona; after a month at Asolo they go to Venice, where they take lodgings in the *Albergo del Universo*, or *Palazzo Brandolin-Rota* on the shady side of the Grand Canal—a house that became their annual autumn resting-place for seven years thereafter; the autumns of 1881 and 1882 are spent at *Saint Pierre la Chartreuse* and those of 1883 and 1885 at Grissoney Saint Jean; in the autumn of 1880 Mrs. Arthur Bronson, an American friend of the Brownings, places at their disposal a suite of rooms in the *Palazzo Giustiniani Recanati*, which formed a supplement to her own house; they keep house here again in 1885; in 1888 Mrs. Bronson gives to them apartments in her own house—a service commemorated by Browning in the preface to "Asolando;" in the salon of Mrs. Bronson the Brownings frequently meet Don Carlos and his family, Prince and Princess Iturbide, the Princess of Montenegro, Prince and Princess Metternich, Sir Henry and Lady Layard, and other persons of note; in 1879 Browning publishes his "Dramatic Lyrics," which are received "with a thrill of suppressed admiration;" this volume included "Earth's Immortalities," "The Boy and the Angel," "Meeting at Night," "Parting at Morning," "Saul," and "Time's Revenges;" in 1880 he publishes a second series of selections from his works.

In the summer of 1881 Dr. (then Mr.) Furnival and Miss Hickey organize the London Browning Society, with the poet's knowledge but without approval or encouragement from him; he had himself long been president of the Shakespeare Society and a member of the Wordsworth Society; in November, 1883, he writes his sonnet to Goldoni, actually scribbling it off while a messenger is waiting for it; in 1884 he again declines an invitation for the lord rectorship of St. Andrew's, receives the degree of LL.D. from the University of Edinburgh, and is made honorary president of the Associated

Societies of Edinburgh ; in 1884 he writes the sonnets " The Founder of the Feast " and " The Names " and in 1886 " Why I am a Liberal ; " in 1885 his son visits Italy for the first time since his mother's death, and is so charmed, as an artist, with Venice that Browning decides to buy a home and settle there permanently ; he bargains for the Palazzo Manzoni on the Grand Canal, but the contract is broken by friends of the original owner ; at this time Browning writes : " I myself shall stick to London, which has been so eminently good and gracious to me, so long as God permits ; only, when the inevitable outrage of Time gets the better of my body (I shall not believe in his reaching my soul and proper self), there will be a capital retreat provided ; " not long afterward his son buys for the family the *Rezzonico Palazzo*, and so the " retreat " is provided ; the Brownings spend the summer of 1884 at St. Moritz at the villa of an American friend, Mrs. Bloomfield Moore ; in 1886, owing to the feeble health of Miss Browning, they go only as far as Llangollen, in Wales, where the poet varies his usual London custom by attending regularly the Sunday afternoon service in the little parish church ; a memorial tablet has since been placed on the spot where he worshipped ; the death of Browning's most intimate friend, Joseph Milsand, in 1888, and the successive demise, about this time, of Miss Haworth, Dickens, Procter, John Forster, Carlyle, Lord Houghton, and others deeply affects him ; he greatly revered Carlyle, often visited him during his last days at Chelsea, and after his death defended him vigorously against the charge of unkindness to his wife ; in the spring of 1886 Browning is made Corresponding Secretary of the Royal Academy, and early in 1887 he publishes " Parleyings with Certain Poets ; " in June, 1887, he removes from Warwick Crescent to De Vere Gardens to a house more sheltered, more conveniently situated, and more modern in construction than his former residence ; here his son is married in December, 1887, to a New York lady, and here in the large rooms the

poet arranges the fine specimens of antique furniture that he had been gathering for years.

In the summer of 1887, with his sister, he is again the guest of Mrs. Moore at St. Moritz ; one of his last occupations during his last winter in London was his arrangement of his father's library of 6,000 volumes and his own library in the new cases at the new home ; he still continues to dine out, to visit every art exhibition, and to answer all correspondents, writing daily till his fingers ache ; in December, 1887, he writes " Rosny," " Beatrice Signori," " Flute Music," and two or three of the " Bad Dreams ;" in 1888 he begins revising his poems for the last and now complete edition, the last volume of which was not published till 1889 ; the greatest change made in any poem at this time was in " Pauline," which he then calls " the only poem which makes me out youngish ;" in August, 1888, he joins his son at Priziero, near Feltre, in Italy—a place that he calls " the most beautiful that I was ever resident in ;" soon afterward they all go to the palace home in Venice, which the son had fitted up in excellent style ; before and during this journey to Italy Browning was seriously ill, but he recovered before reaching Venice ; he returns to London late in the autumn of 1888, and makes his annual visit to Oxford ; in August, 1889, he starts on his last trip to Venice, stopping for several weeks at Asolo, as the guest again of his American friend, Mrs. Bronson ; before leaving Asolo he enters into negotiations for the purchase of a piece of land belonging to the old castle, where he proposes to build a summer home to be christened " Pippa Passes ;" the negotiations are delayed by political considerations, and are completed only on the day of the poet's death ; he reaches Venice late in October ; early in November he takes a severe cold while taking his daily walk on the Lido ; he dies at the *Rezzonico Palazzo*, December 12, 1889 ; at the suggestion of the Dean of Westminster, the poet's body is sent for interment in Westminster Abbey, though not till after a very im-

posing funeral service conducted by the city of Venice ; later, a bronze tablet was placed by that city in the palace where Browning died ; besides the name and date of birth and death, this tablet bears these lines from one of his poems :

“ Open my heart, and you will see  
Graved inside of it, ‘ Italy.’ ”

The city of Florence also marked with a tablet the house where the Brownings lived during their residence in that city ; “ Asolando ” was published on the day of Browning’s death.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

**I. Intense Vigor.**—"His genius is robust with vigorous blood, and his tone has the cheeriness of intellectual health. . . . His poetry is a tonic; it braces and invigorates. . . . The supple, nervous strength and swiftness of the blank verse [in "Bishop Blougram's Apology"] is, in its way, as fine as the qualities we have observed in the other monologues: there is a splendid 'go' in it, a vast capacity for business; the verse is literally alive with meaning and packed with thought. . . . 'The Worst of It' is thrillingly intense and alive; and the swift force and tremulous eagerness of its very original rhythm and metre translate its sense into sound with perfect fitness. . . . Mr. Browning's style is vital; his verse moves to the throbbing of an inner organism, not to the pulsations of a machine."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"He is always masculine and vigorous. Original modern



poetry is apt to be enervating, producing the effect of intellectual luxury; or if, like Wordsworth's, it is as cool and bright as morning dew, it carries us away from the world to mountain solitudes and transcendental dreams. Mr. Browning's—while it strains our intellect to the utmost, as all really intellectual poetry must, and has none of the luxuriance of fancy and wealth of sentiment which relaxes the fibre of the mind—keeps us still in a living world; not always the modern world, very seldom, indeed, the world of modern England, but still in contact with keen, quick, vigorous life."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"It is somewhat strange that a poet who can, upon occasion, show such a fine feeling for rhythm and the music of words, should so frequently set both at nought in preference for verses which stun the ear with their rudeness—never, though, without imparting some sense of admiration for the vigor of the blow."—*Richard Grant White.*

"What enchants is the speed, the glow, the distinctness, the power of each well-placed touch."—*Andrew Lang.*

"The chief attraction in Mr. Browning's poems is to be found in the solid and vigorous thinking which characterizes them and the life which they possess and, consequently, can impart."—*M. D. Conway.*

"It would be most unjust, however, . . . to pass over the dignity and splendor of the verse in many places, where the intensity of the writer's mood finds worthy embodiment in a sustained gravity and vigor and finish of diction not to be surpassed. . . . When all is said that can be said about the violences which from time to time invade the poem, it remains true that the complete work affects the reader most powerfully with that wide unity of impressions which it is the highest aim of dramatic art—and perhaps of all art—to produce."—*John Morley.*

"The old fire flashes out, thirty years after, in 'Hervé Riel,' another vigorous production."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"Mr. Browning had plenty to say on whatsoever subject he took up; and had a fresh, original, vigorous manner of saying it."—*George Saintsbury*.

"Life is never life to him except in those hours when it rises to a complete outpouring of itself. To live is to experience intensely. . . . The singular combination of great intellectual range with passionate intensity of utterance which characterizes Browning is explained by the indissoluble union in which he holds thought and action."—*H. W. Mabie*.

"It is the sea in its glory, the storm in its might, the mountain in its towering splendor, the heavens in their unutterable depths, which made the style of Browning. . . . His poetry is like the strong and resistless force of a great river carrying on its bosom mighty ships and many a smaller craft."—*G. W. Cooke*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

- "Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,  
     The mist in my face,  
 When the snows begin and the blasts denote  
     I am nearing the place,  
 The power of the night and the press of the storm,  
     The post of the foe;  
 . . . . .
- "I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forebore,  
     And bade me creep past.  
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,  
     The heroes of old,  
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
     Of pain, darkness, and cold."—*Prospice*.
- "Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
 One task more declined, one more foot-path untrod,  
 One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,  
 One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!  
 Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!  
 There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain;  
 Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,  
 Never glad confident morning again."—*The Lost Leader*.

" It is a lie—their priests, their Pope,  
 Their saints, their . . . all they fear or hope  
 Are lies and lies—there ! thro' my door  
 And ceiling, there ! and walls and floor,  
 There, lies, they lie, shall still be hurled,  
 Till spite of them I reach the world !  
 No part in aught they hope or fear !  
 No Heaven with them, no Hell,—and here,  
 No Earth, not so much space as pens  
 My body in their worst of dens  
 But shall bear God and Man my cry :  
 Lies—lies, again—and still, they lie ! "

—*The Ring and the Book.*

**2. Analysis of Character—Introspection.**—" This endeavor is not to set men in action for the pleasure of seeing them move, but to see and show, in their action and inaction alike, the real impulses of their being ; to see how each soul conceives of itself. . . . Suppose he is attracted by some particular soul or by some particular act. The problem occupies him—the more abstruse and entangled the more attractive to him it is ; he winds his way into the heart of it, or, we might better say, he picks to pieces the machinery. . . . ' Colombe's Birthday ' is mainly concerned with inward rather than outward action ; in this the characters themselves, what they are in their own souls, what they think of themselves and what others think of them, constitute the chief interest. . . . It is a result of this purpose, in consonance with this practice, that we get in Mr. Browning's works so large a number of distinct human types and so great a variety of surroundings in which they are placed. Only in Shakespeare can we find anything like the same variety of distinct human characters—vital creations endowed with thoughtful life. . . . The men and women who live and move in that new world of his creation are as varied as life itself ; they are kings and beggars, saints and lovers, great captains, poets, painters, musicians, priests and popes, Jews, gypsies and der-

vishes, street-girls, princesses, dancers with the wicked witchery of the daughter of Herodias, wives with the devotion of the wife of Brutus, joyous girls and malevolent graybeards, statesmen, cavaliers and soldiers of humanity, tyrants and bigots, ancient sages and modern spiritualists, heretics, scholars, scoundrels, devotees, rabbis, persons of quality and men of low estate—men and women as multiform as nature and society has made them.”—*John Addington Symonds*.

“His mission has been that of exploring those secret regions which generate the forces whose outward phenomena it is for the playwrights to illustrate. He has opened a new field for the display of emotional power, founding, so to speak, a sub-dramatic school of poetry, whose office is to follow the workings of the mind, to discover the impalpable elements of which human motives and passions are composed. . . . Browning, as the poet of psychology, escapes to that stronghold whither, as I have said, science and materialism are not yet prepared to follow him. . . . He has preferred to study human hearts rather than the forms of nature. . . . Browning was the prophet of that reaction which holds that the proper study of mankind is man. His effort, weak or able, was at figure-painting in distinction from that of landscape or still-life.”—*E. C. Stedman*.

“Mr. Browning is not a great dramatist, for in style he always remains himself; but he is a great intellectual interpreter of human character. . . . He does enter into character as a prelude to the excitement of conflict, but only describes the conflict in order to illustrate the character. He has the command of motives which is given by a constant study of the secrets of the heart, either for saintly and mystical or for worldly and selfish reasons. . . . In the brilliancy of his descriptions of character he has no rival.”—*R. H. Hutton*.

“The subtle genius of a poet whose mastery of psychology is universally recognized has marvelous power of penetrating

the secrets of natures widely dissimilar and of experiences which have little in common save that they are a part of life. . . . We are irresistibly drawn to him, not only because he gives us his view of things, the substance of his personal life, but because he makes ourselves clear and comprehensible to us. . . . Only those who have carefully studied the works ["Paracelsus," "Sordello," etc.] know what astonishing power is embodied in them, what marvelous subtlety of analysis, what masterly grouping and interplay of motives."—*H. W. Mabie.*

"We must look to the play itself ["Balaustion's Adventure"] for an illustration of his . . . facility, to which 'The Ring and the Book' gave expression on so monumental a scale, for penetrating to the springs of character; . . . and the use of 'Balaustion' is to add to the outer record a coherent and comprehensible version of the inner character and motives."—*Sidney Colvin.*

"Mr. Browning has interpreted every one of our emotions, from divine love to human friendship, from the despair of the soul to the depths of personal hatred."—*Andrew Lang.*

"A strong individuality often limits a man, but Browning had with it so much imagination that he flung himself—retaining still his distinctive elements—into a multitude of other lives, in various places, and at various times in history. In each of these he conceives himself, imagines all the fresh circumstances, all the new scenery, all the strange passions and knowledge of each age around himself, and creates himself afresh as modified by them. It is always Browning, then, who writes. . . . Browning has excelled the rest in character-making and in the multitude and variety of his characters. Nevertheless, Browning always turns up in every character. When his characters are men, a sudden turn confronts us in them with which we are well acquainted. . . . The women are more built up by intellectual analysis based on

Browning's own emotion—that is, a man's specialized emotion—than created at a single jet.”—*Stopford Brooke*.

“He never seems to be telling us what he thinks and feels; but he puts before us some man, male or female, whose individuality soon becomes as clear and as absolute as our own. The poet does not appear; indeed, so wholly is he merged in the creature of his own will that, as we hear that creature speak, his creator is, for the time, completely forgotten.”—*Richard Grant White*.

“[“The Ring and the Book”] is a great psychological poem, evidently written by Mr. Browning for the purpose of elucidating the mysteries of fact and nature and of human action. The incidents . . . afford the fullest scope to the poet for the dissection of human passions and the removal of the veil which interposes between the heart of man and the outer world. . . . His greatest gift [is] that of the capacity to read human nature. . . . In the dramatic faculty and power of psychological analysis his superiority over his contemporaries is easily perceived.”—*G. B. Smith*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“She had

A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,  
Too easily impressed; she liked whate’er  
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
Sir, ’t was all one! My favor at her breast,  
The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
The bough of cherries some officious fool  
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
She rode with ’round the terrace—all and each  
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,  
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked  
Somehow—I do not know—as if she ranked  
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
With anybody’s gift.”—*My Last Duchess*.

" He took such cognizance of men and things ;  
 If any beat a horse, you felt he saw ;  
 If any cursed a woman, he took note ;  
 Yet stared at nobody,—you stared at him,  
 And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,  
 He seemed to know you and expect as much."

—*How it Strikes a Contemporary.*

" I drew them, fat and lean : then, folks at church,  
 From good old gossips waiting to confess  
 Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,  
 To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,  
 Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there  
 With the little children round him in a row."

—*Fra Lippo Lippi.*

**3. Inversion — Obscurity — Chaotic Sentence Structure.**—" A more completely opaque medium than the wording either of his own thoughts or of the author's thoughts about him [in " Sordello " ] Talleyrand himself would have failed to invent. . . . Mr. Browning rushes upon you with a sort of intellectual douche, half stuns you with the abruptness of the shock, repeats the application from a multitude of swift various jets from unexpected points of the compass, and leaves you at last giddy, and wondering where you are ; but with a vague sense that, were you properly prepared beforehand, you would discern a real unity and power in this intellectual water-spout, though its first descent only drenched and bewildered your imagination. . . . As to the relation of the whole to the part, Mr. Browning's poems are not so organized that the parts give you any high gratification till you catch a view of the whole. . . . The wording [of the " Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister " ] . . . is neither melodious nor even very lucid for its purpose ; and the parts . . . are diminished images of the whole, and hence enigmatic until the whole has been two or three times read. . . . The obscurity wherein Browning disguises his realism

is but the semblance of imagination ; a mist through which rugged details jut out, while the central truth is feebly to be seen. . . . Where else is there in Browning, for what comes near lyric fire, anything like that apostrophe which ends the prologue to 'The Ring and the Book,' the first couplet of which has more of the ring of inspiration than anything else in the whole range of his poems, though in the closing lines he repasses into that over-compressed thought which makes him at times so obscure."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"One half of 'Sordello'—and that, with Mr. Browning's usual ill-luck, the first half—is undoubtedly obscure. It is as difficult to read as 'Endymion' or the 'Revolt of Islam,' and for the same reason: the author's lack of experience in the art of composition."—*Augustine Birrell.*

"We come to no places in 'Sordello' where we can rest and dream or look up at the sky. Ideas, emotions, images, analyses, descriptions, still come crowding in. There is too much of everything ; we cannot see the wood for the trees. . . . The obscurity of 'Sordello' arises not so much from peculiarities of style and the involved structure of occasional sentences as from the unrelaxing demand which is made throughout upon the intellectual and imaginative energy and alertness of the reader. . . . There is not a line of the poem that is not as full of matter as a line can be."—*Edward Dowden.*

"What I have said of the woman's [Mrs. Browning] obscurity, affectations, elisions, will apply to the man's—with his i'ths and o'ths, his dashes, breaks, halting measures, and oracular exclamations that convey no dramatic meaning to the reader. . . . Parodies on his style, thrown off as burlesque, are more intelligible than much of his 'Dramatis Personæ.' Unlike Tennyson, he does not comprehend the limits of a theme ; nor is he careful as to the relative importance of either themes or details ; his mind is so alert that its minute turns of thought must be uttered ; he dwells with



equal precision upon the meanest and grandest objects, and laboriously jots down every point that occurs to him—parenthesis within parenthesis—until we have a tangle as intricate as the lines drawn by an anemometer upon the recording sheet. The poem is all zigzag, crisscross, at odds and ends ; and though we come out right at last, strength and patience are exhausted in mastering it. Apply the rule that nothing should be told in verse which can be told in prose, and half his measures would be condemned.”—*E. C. Stedman*.

“ In ‘ Paracelsus ’ the difficulties were in the quantity and quality of things ; in ‘ Sordello ’ there is the additional difficulty of an impracticable style. In proportion to the depth or novelty of thought, the poet has chosen to render the vehicle difficult in which it is conveyed—sometimes by erudite elaboration of parenthesis within parenthesis and question upon query—sometimes by its levity, jaunty indifference, and apparent contempt of everything—sometimes it has an interminable period or one the right end of which you cannot find : a knotted serpent, which either has no discernible tail, or has several, the ends of which are in the mouths of other serpents or else flanking in the air—sometimes it has a series of the shortest possible periods, *viz.*, of one word or of two or three words.”—*R. H. Horne*.

“ The condensation of style which had marked Mr. Browning’s previous work and which has marked his later, was here [“Sordello”]—in consequence of an unfortunate and most unnecessary dread of verbosity, induced by a rash and foolish critique—accentuated not infrequently into dislocation. . . . Mr. Browning is too much the reverse of obscure, he is only too brilliant and subtle.”—*John Addington Symonds*.

“ The first time you read many of his poems you make scarcely any headway. You begin to question your own sanity and that of the poet. You have lurking doubts as to whether you understand the English tongue. . . . He was truly the most obscure thinker that ever expressed himself

in the English language. But his obscurity arises, not from the obscurity of the thought, but from its overfulness."—*H. H. Boyesen.*

"They [his thoughts] are twisted, entangled, and broken up in a way that I do not like to call wilful, but which has that air."—*Stopford Brooke.*

"Ellipsis reigns supreme; prepositions and relatives are dispensed with; nominatives and accusatives play hide and seek 'round verbs; we get lost in the maze of transpositions and stumble over irritating and obscure parentheses."—*R. W. Church.*

"There can be no doubt that to 'Sordello' is chiefly attributable the prevalent idea of Mr. Browning's obscurity as a writer. . . . The reader of Mr. Browning must learn first of all that he is one of that class of writers whose finest thoughts must be often read 'between the lines.' Sometimes where a passage seems obscure one has only to pause and reflect what would be the tone in which a certain speech should naturally be uttered to find the dark saying light up to one of perhaps unusual simplicity."—*M. D. Conway.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"About that strangest, saddest, sweetest song  
I, when a girl, heard in Kameiros once,  
And, after, saved my life by? Oh, so glad  
To tell you my adventures! Petale,  
Phullis, Charope, Chrusion! You must know,  
This 'after' fell in that unhappy time  
When poor reluctant Nikias, pushed by fate,  
Went fluttering against Syracuse."

—*Balaustion's Adventure.*

"Having and holding, till  
I imprint her fast  
On the void at last  
As the sun whom he will  
By the calotypist's skill—

“ Then—if my heart’s strength serve,  
 And through all and each  
 Of the veils I reach  
 To her soul and never swerve,  
 Knitting an iron nerve—

“ Command her soul to advance  
 And inform the shape  
 Which has made escape  
 And before my countenance  
 Answers me glance for glance—

“ I, still with a gesture fit  
 Of my hands that best  
 Do my soul’s behest,  
 Pointing the power from it,  
 While myself do steadfast sit.”—*Mesmerism.*

“ Its businesses in blood and blaze this year  
 But wile the hour away—a pastime slight  
 Till he shall step upon the platform right !  
 And, now thus much is settled, cast in rough,  
 Proved feasible, be counselled ! thought enough.—  
 Slumber, Sordello ! any day will serve :  
 Were it a less digested plan ! how swerve  
 To-morrow ? ”—*Sordello.*

**4. Fondness for Monologue.**—“ We see also [in his “ Dramatic Lyrics ”] the first formal beginning of the dramatic monologue, which became, from the period of ‘ Dramatic Lyrics ’ onward, the staple form and special instrument of the poet—an instrument finely touched, at times, by other performers, but of which he is the only Liszt. . . . In ‘ Men and Women ’ Mr. Browning’s special instrument—the monologue—is brought to perfection. Such monologues as ‘ Andrea del Sarto ’ or the ‘ Epistle of Karshish ’ never have been and probably never will be surpassed, on their own ground, after their own order. . . . In ‘ Bishop Blougram’s Apology ’ the monologue introduces a new element, the casuistical. . . . This form—intellectual rather than

emotional, argumentative more than dramatic—has had from this time forward a considerable attraction for Mr. Browning, and it is responsible for some of his hardest work, such as ‘Fifine at the Fair’ and ‘Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.’

. . . This form of monologue appears in Mr. Browning’s very earliest poem, and he has developed it more skilfully and employed it more consistently than any other writer. Even in works like ‘Sordello’ and ‘The Red Cotton Night-Cap Country,’ which are thrown into the narrative form, the finest and most characteristic parts are in monologue; and ‘The Inn Album’ is a series of slightly linked dialogues which are only monologues in disguise. Nearly all the lyrics, romances, idyls; nearly all the miscellaneous poems, long and short, are monologues. And even in the dramas . . . there is visibly a growing tendency toward the monologue, with its mental and individual, in place of the dialogue with its active and various, interests.”—*John Addington Symonds*.

“Browning is a dramatic thinker,—generally thinking within the imaginative fetters of monologue, even when not throwing his thoughts into that external form. . . . He is a great imaginative apologist rather than either a lyric or dramatic poet. . . . The consequence is that he is constantly tempted to throw his dramatic conceptions into a form which rids him altogether of the necessity for a plot. . . . They are generally apologetic monologues addressed to a visionary but half-indicated auditor. . . . Wherever we have a peculiarly jarring metre and jingling rhymes, there Mr. Browning is attempting to disguise . . . a speech in a song, to hide the tight garment of apologetic monologue by throwing over it the easy undress of spontaneous feeling.”—*R. H. Hutton*.

“Even in the most conventional, this poet cannot refrain from the long monologues, stilted action, and metaphysical discussion which mark the closet-drama and unfit a composition for the stage.”—*E. C. Stedman*.

"As part of his method, it should be noted that his real trust is upon the monologue rather than upon the dialogue. . . . In much the larger number of Browning's poems there is but one speaker, so that his method may be properly called the monodramatic. The time, the country, the social and the moral environment, the situation and character of the speaker, are all developed through his words, no clew being given to them except in the title of the poem."—*G. W. Cooke.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"And she,—she lies in my hand as tame  
As a pear late basking over a wall;  
Just a touch to try, and off it came;  
'T is mine—can I let it fall?

"With no mind to eat it, that's the worst!  
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist?  
'Twas quenching a dozen blue-flies' thirst  
When I gave its stalk a twist.

"And I,—what I seem to my friend, you see;  
What I soon shall seem to his love, you guess:  
What I seem to myself, do you ask of me?  
No hero, I confess.

"'T is an awkward thing to play with souls,  
And matter enough to save one's own:  
Yet think of my friend, and the burning coals  
We played with for bits of stone!"

—*A Light Woman.*

"You're my friend—  
What a thing friendship is, world without end!  
How it gives the heart and soul a stir-up  
As if somebody broached you a glorious runlet,  
And poured out, all lovelily, sparklingly sunlit,  
Our green Moldavia, the streaky syrup,

Cotnar as old as the time of the Druids—  
 Friendship may match with that monarch of fluids ;  
 Each supplies a dry brain, fills you its ins-and-outs,  
 Gives your life's hour-glass a shake when the thin sand doubts  
 Whether to run on or stop short, and guarantees  
 Age is not all made of stark sloth and arrant ease."

—*The Flight of the Duchess.*

" I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave ;  
 You need not clap your torches to my face.  
 Zooks, what's to blame ? you think you see a monk !  
 What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,  
 And here you catch me at an alley's end  
 Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar ?  
 The Carmine's my cloister : hunt it up,  
 Do—harry out, if you must show your zeal,  
 Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,  
 And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,  
 Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company."

—*Fra Lippo Lippi.*

✓ **5. Optimism — Robust Fortitude.**—In this day of languid pessimism, when the columns of our daily press teem with records of morbidness, despair, and suicide, to read one of Browning's robust lyrics is like drinking in a draught of mountain air, uncontaminated by the smoke and dust of civilization. No poet better illustrates Lowell's phrase about " bracing the moral fibre."

" Browning is one of the healthiest of modern English poets ; there is nothing morbid in his writing ; he takes an intensely earnest view of life and its duties. Taking the completed round of his work, from ' Paracelsus ' to ' Asolando,' the reader will find that Browning is essentially optimistic. To him life is a glad, sweet thing ; so he will rejoice therein and be glad. Life is a serious and earnest piece of business—yet it is also a beautiful and joyous thing withal, and to be enjoyed as the Giver meant it to be."—*Augustine Birrell.*

"The key-note of his philosophy is :

'God's in his heaven,  
All's right with the world !'

He has such a hopefulness of belief in human nature that he shrunk from no man, however clothed and cloaked in evil, however miry with stumblings and fallings. . . . But the test of optimism is its sight of evil. Mr. Browning has fathomed it and he can still hope, for he sees the reflection of the sun in the depths of every dull pool and puddle. . . . The teaching in 'A Bean-Stripe' is the same that Mr. Browning has given us all through his career: the utterance of a sturdy but by no means facile optimism, not untried, indeed, but unconquerable."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"Browning had contempt for hopelessness, hatred for despair, joy for eager hope, faith in perfection, pity for all effort which only claimed this world, for all love which was content to begin and end on earth, reproof for all goodness and beauty which was content to die forever."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"There is none of the feeble optimism of his age in Browning. He is no poet who exults in the enormous preponderance of good over evil in human life. . . . On the other hand, no one has taught more positively than Browning that life, if confined to this earth and without any infinite love in it, is not the life which has filled the noblest minds with exultation, nor, indeed, any shadow of it."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"Mr. Browning is an optimist; but the idea of a progress of mankind enters into his poems in a comparatively slight degree. Mr. Browning makes that progress dependent on the productions of higher passions and aspirations,—hopes and joys and sorrow."—*Edward Dowden*.

"The continuity of civilization and of the life of the human spirit, widening by an inevitable and healthful process of growth and expansion, evidently enters into all his thought, and gives it a certain repose even in the intensity of passion-

ate utterance. Whatever decay of former ideals and traditions his contemporaries may discover and lament, Browning holds to the general soundness and wholesomeness of progress, and finds each successive stage of growth not antagonistic but supplementary to those which have preceded it. . . . Though all the world turn pessimist, this singer will still drink of the fountains of joy and trace the courses of the streams that flow from it by green masses of foliage and the golden glory of fruit. . . . Instead of being overwhelmed by the vastness of modern life, he rejoices in it as the swimmer rejoices when he feels the fathomless sea buoyant to his stroke, and floats secure, the abysses beneath and the infinity of space overhead."—*H. W. Mabie*.

"His optimism . . . is a conviction which has sustained the shocks of criticism and the test of facts. Outer law and inner motive are, for the poet, manifestations of the same beneficent purpose ; and instead of duty in the sense of an autocratic, imperative, or beneficent tyranny, he finds deep beneath man's foolishness and sin a constant tendency toward the good which is bound up with the very nature of man's reason and will. . . . Carlyle's cry of despair is turned by Browning into a song of victory. While the former regards the struggle between good and evil as a fixed battle, in which the forces are immovably interlocked, the latter has the consciousness of battling against a retreating foe ; and the conviction of coming triumph gives joyous vigor to every stroke. . . . He strives hard to come into the misery of man in all its sadness ; and, after doing so, he claims, not as a matter of poetic sentiment but as a matter of strict truth, that good is the heart and reality of it all. It is true that he cannot demonstrate the truth of his principle by reference to all the facts any more than the scientific man can justify his hypothesis in every detail ; but he holds it as a faith which reason can justify and experience establish, although not in every isolated phenomenon."—*Henry James*.



"One glorious characteristic of his many-sided poetry . . . is Mr. Browning's magnificent optimism. . . . It is large-sighted and nobly masculine. . . . It is an optimism which had been nobly fought for through years of neglect, disappointment, poverty, and trial, till it had become the supreme conviction of his reason."—*F. W. Farrar.*

"For him there can be no eventual failure; there may be often an apparent failure—the soul may be unmade by folly, unmanned by evil—but the nobler part of man's nature must finally triumph; and the soul will be remade 'in those other heights in other lives' which shall yet be a reality to every son of Adam. If a man does fail in his pursuit after Truth or Goodness or Beauty, he is not finally overcome; he has gained somewhat—he has endeavored; for had he not attempted he could not have failed: consequently, failure but implies ultimate success."—*William G. Kingsland.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Then welcome each rebuff  
That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
Each sting that bids not sit nor stand but go!  
Be our joys three parts pain!  
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;  
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

"Let us not always say,  
'Spite of this flesh to-day  
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'  
As the bird wings and sings,  
Let us cry, 'All good things  
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul!'"  
—*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

"It's wiser being good than bad;  
It's safer being meek than fierce;  
It's fitter being sane than mad.  
My own hope is, a sun will pierce

The thickest cloud earth ever stretched ;  
 That, after Last returns the First,  
 Though a wide compass 'round be fetched ;  
 That what began best can't end worst,  
 Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

—*Apparent Failure.*

" God uses us to help each other so,  
 Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,  
 Your cullion's hanging face ? A bit of chalk,  
 And trust me but you should, though ! How much more  
 If I drew higher things with the same truth !  
 That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,  
 Interpret God to all of you ! Oh ! oh !  
 It makes me mad to see what men shall do  
 And we in our graves ! This world's no blot for us  
 Nor blank ; it means intensely, and means good :  
 To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

—*Fra Lippo Lippi.*

**6. Strong, Undaunted Religious Faith.**—Much has been written concerning Browning's religious creed, but there seems to be no general agreement in defining it. Certainly he was not "orthodox," in the ordinary acceptance of that term ; yet it is doubtful if any of the "orthodox" poets, or all of them put together, have done so much to lead and lift men up to a higher life and to nobler aspirations. A Deist Browning certainly is, if not much more.

"This vivid hope and trust in man is bound up with a strong and strenuous faith in God. Mr. Browning's Christianity is wider than our creeds, and is all the more vitally Christian in that it never sinks into pietism. He is never didactic ; but his faith is the root of his art, and transforms and transfigures it."—*John Addington Symonds.*

"Browning never faltered in his claim of the spiritual as the first, as the master in human nature ; nor in his faith of God with us, making, guiding, loving us, and crowning us at last with righteousness and love. . . . No poets have

ever been more theological, not even Byron and Shelley. [Speaking of Browning and Tennyson.] What original sin means and what position man holds on account of it, lies at the root of half of Browning's poetry ; and the greater part of his very simple metaphysics belongs to the solution of this question of the defect in man."—*Stopford Brooke*.

" Browning is the modern interpreter of the divine in nature and life and history."—*R. H. Horne*.

" Mr. Browning in this volume [" La Saisiaz : The Two Poets of Croisic "] declares that he is ' very sure of God.' It is not that he has remained unmoved during the discussion of the difficult religious problems of the day. He has evidently followed them well, but the circumstances which led to the production of ' La Saisiaz ' demonstrated that he could not hark back from his robust intellectual and spiritual faith into the mists of infidelity. . . . The whole of this poem [" Pippa Passes "] is permeated with that large faith in God and in humanity which has always been characteristic of Mr. Browning."—*G. B. Smith*.

" The difficulties which surround him are not those of a casuist but the stubborn questionings of a spirit whose religious faith is thoroughly earnest and fearless. . . . He is clearly one of that class of poets who are also prophets. He was never merely ' the idle singer of an empty day ' but one for whom poetic enthusiasm was intimately bound with religious faith and who spoke ' in numbers.' "—*Henry James*.

" Mr. Browning is pre-eminently the religious poet—healthy, manly, brave ; with a hope like Jacob's ladder, reaching from earth to highest heaven. To him Hope is visible the world around. . . . Browning is one of the healthiest of English poets ; there is nothing morbid in his writing—as he himself so recently told us ; of necessity, therefore, he takes an intensely earnest view of life and its duties. To him this present life is not the playtime but the apprenticeship of

the soul ; not the place for rest but for good, honest, hearty work."—*W. G. Kingsland*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" I believe it ! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive :  
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.  
All's one gift : thou canst grant it, moreover, as prompt to my  
prayer,  
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air."  
—*Saul*.

" Fool ! All that is at all,  
Lasts ever, past recall ;  
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure :  
What entered into thee,  
That was, is, and shall be :  
Time's wheel runs back or stops : Potter and clay endure.

" He fixed thee mid this dance  
Of plastic circumstance,  
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest :  
Machinery just meant  
To give thy soul its bent,  
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed."  
—*Rabbi Ben Esra*.

" Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name ?  
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands !  
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same ?  
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power ex-  
pands ?  
There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as  
before ;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;  
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good  
more ;  
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect  
round."—*Abt Vogler*.

7. **Grotesqueness—Incongruity.**—" Mr. Browning is  
an artist working by incongruity. Possibly hardly one of his

most considerable efforts can be found which is not great because of its odd mixture. He puts together things which no one else would have put together. . . . It is very natural that a poet whose wishes incline or whose genius conducts him to a grotesque art should be attracted towards mediæval subjects. . . . Good elements hidden in horrid accompaniments are the special theme of grotesque art; and these mediæval life and legends afford more copiously than could have been furnished before Christianity gave it new elements of good or since modern civilization has removed some few, at least, of the elements of destruction. . . . Browning has given many excellent specimens of grotesque art within proper boundaries and limits."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"With the doubtful exception of the 'Heretic's Tragedy,' 'Caliban upon Setebos' is probably the finest piece of grotesque art in the language. . . . The 'Pietro' of Abano is a fine piece of grotesque art, full of pungent humor, acuteness, worldly wisdom, and clever phrasing and rhyming. . . . The poem is one of the most characteristic examples of that 'Teutonic grotesque, which lies in the expression of deep ideas through fantastic form'—a grotesque of noble and cultivated art—of which Mr. Browning is as great a master in poetry as Carlyle was in prose."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"A more valid accusation touches the many verbal perversities, in which a poet has less right than another to indulge. The compound Latin and English of 'Don Giacinto,' notwithstanding the fun of the piece, still grows a burden to the flesh. Then there are harsh and formless lines, bursts of metrical chaos, from which a writer's dignity and self-respect ought surely to be enough to preserve him. Again, there are passages marked by a coarse violence of expression that is nothing short of barbarous. . . . It may well be, therefore, that the grotesque caprices which Mr. Browning unfortunately permits to himself may find misguided admirers, or, what is worse, even imitators. . . . The countrymen

of Shakespeare have had to learn to forgive terrible uncouthnesses, blunt outrages to form and beauty, to fine creative genius."—*John Morley*.

"He loves what is odd, grotesque, morbid, quaint. Browning's poetry is often harsh in manner, wanting in melody, and rough in rhyme and metre. He introduces uncouth and distracting rhymes."—*G. W. Cooke*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is past,  
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,  
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin ;  
And while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,  
And feels about his spine small eft things course,  
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh—  
. . . . .

Thinketh he dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon ;  
Thinketh he made it, with the sun to match.  
But not the stars—the stars came otherwise :  
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that."

—*Caliban upon Setebos*.

" That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,  
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,  
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—  
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need !  
And then how I shall lie through centuries,  
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,  
And see God made and eaten all day long,  
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste  
Good strong, thick, stupefying incense-smoke !  
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,  
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,  
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,  
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,  
And let the bedclothes for a mortcloth drop  
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work."

—*The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*.

" A viscid choler is observable  
 In tertians, I was nearly bold to say ;  
 And falling-sickness hath a happier cure  
 Than our school wots of : there's a spider here  
 Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,  
 Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back ;  
 Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his mind,  
 The Syrian run-a-gate I trust this to ?  
 His service payeth me a sublimate  
 Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.  
 Best wait : I reach Jerusalem at morn."—*An Epistle.*

**8. Earnestness—Soberness.**—With Browning, life is a serious matter. There is little of the sportive element in his verse, little of the lighter forms of humor.

" Most of Browning's poems might be described precisely as proposing for their immediate object truth, not pleasure ; though, when clearly apprehended, they seldom fail to give that higher kind of imaginative satisfaction which is one of the most enviable intellectual states, they give a very moderate amount of immediate sensitive pleasure."—*R. H. Hutton.*

" ' A Blot on the 'Scutcheon ' [on the stage] failed. This, of course, for there is little in it to relieve the human spirit—which cannot bear too much of earnestness and woe added to the mystery and wonder of our daily lives."—*E. C. Stedman.*

" His voice sounds loudest and also clearest for the things which, as a race, we like best—the fascination of faith, the acceptance of life, the respect for its mysteries, the endurance of its changes, the vitality of the will, the validity of character, the beauty of action, the seriousness, above all, of the great human passion."—*Henry James.*

" The lines [George Meredith's " Modern Love "] convey poetic sentiment rather than reasoned truth ; while Mr. Browning's close [to " The Ring and the Book "] would be no unfit epilogue to a scientific essay on history or a treatise on the errors of the human understanding and the inaccuracy of human opinions and judgment. This is the common note

of his highest work ; hard thought and reason illustrating themselves in dramatic circumstances, and the thought and reason are not wholly fused, they exist apart and irradiate with far-shooting beams the moral confusion of the tragedy."

—*John Morley.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,  
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,  
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,  
Made him our pattern to live and to die !  
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,  
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves !  
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,  
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves."

—*The Lost Leader.*

" Poor vaunt of life, indeed,  
Were man but formed to feed  
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast :  
Such feasting ended, then  
As sure an end to men ;  
Irks care the crop-full bird ? Frets doubt the maw-crammed  
beast ?

.....  
" For thence,—a paradox  
Which comforts while it mocks,—  
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail :  
What I aspired to be,  
And was not, comforts me :  
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale."

—*Rabbi Ben Esra.*

" Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows !  
But not quite so sunk that moments,  
Sure though seldom, are denied us,  
When the spirit's true endowments  
Stand out plainly from its false ones,  
And apprise it if pursuing  
Or the right way or the wrong way,  
To its triumph or undoing.



“ There are flashes struck from midnights,  
 There are fire-flames noondays kindle,  
 Whereby piled-up honours perish,  
 Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,  
 While just this or that poor impulse,  
 Which for once had play unstified,  
 Seems the sole work of a lifetime  
 That away the rest have trifled.”—*Cristina*.

9. **Cool, Grim Satire, Often Humorous.**—As might be expected in a man of Browning's robust temperament, he deals but little in the milder forms of satire. There is little of the good-humored banter of Lamb, little of the sly thrust of Addison. Like Johnson, Burke, and Macaulay, Browning prefers a bludgeon to a stiletto, and strikes his victim squarely in front or pierces him with arrows that leave a stinging wound.

“ This power [satire] is a favorite with Browning, who certainly possesses it abundant in measure and trenchant in quality. He has employed it with singular success; but then to its employment he has not unfrequently sacrificed poetry. . . . Each [monologue] is a legitimate, because a poetic, exercise of the tremendous power of satire possessed by its writer. And each gives proof of how disinterested he is in its employment; since he forbears all appeal to the ill-nature of his readers by directing its lightnings against evil-doers remote from them, instead (like the older satirists) of aiming them at the sinners at their doors. . . . Nor should we omit to notice the deep-rooted convictions, alike moral and religious, from which Browning's severer satire springs; or fail to acknowledge that if he sometimes disallows the claims of the beautiful, he is never unmindful of those of the truth.”—*Stopford Brooke*.

“ As a humorist in poetry, Mr. Browning takes rank with our greatest. His humor, like most of his qualities, is peculiar to himself; though no doubt Carlyle had something of it.

It is of remarkably wide capacity, and ranges from the effervescence of pure fun and freak to that salt and briny laughter whose taste is bitterer than tears."—*John Addington Symonds*.

"His humor is as genuine as that of Carlyle, and if his laugh have not the earthquake character with which Emerson has so happily labelled the shaggy merriment of that Jean Paul, Burns, yet it is always sincere and hearty, and there is a tone of meaning in it which always sets us to thinking."—*Lowell*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Was it 'grammar' wherein you would coach me—

Was it 'clearness of words which convey thought'?

Ay, if words ever needed enswathe naught

But ignorance, impudence, envy

And malice—what word-swathe would then vie

With yours for a clearness crystalline?

But had you to put in one small line

Some thought big and bouncing—as noddle

Of goose, born to cackle and waddle,

You'd know, as you hissed, spat, and sputtered,

Clear 'quack-quack' is easily uttered."—*Pacchiarotto*.

"See, as the prettiest graves will do in time,

Our poet's wants the freshness of its prime;

Spite of the sexton's browsing horse, the sods

Have struggled through its binding osier rods;

Headstone and half-sunk footstone lean awry,

Wanting the brick-work promised by-and-by;

How the minute gray lichens, plate o'er plate,

Have softened down the crisp-cut name and date!"

—*Earth's Immortalities*.

"And this—why, he was red in vain,

Or black—poor fellow that is blue!

What fancy was it, turned your brain?

Oh, women were the prize for you!

Money gets women, cards and dice  
 Get money, and ill-luck gets just  
 The copper couch and one clear, nice,  
 Cool squirt of water o'er your bust—  
 The right thing to extinguish lust!"

—*Apparent Failure.*

**10. Fondness for Argumentation.**—"One may find such a point in that ["Balaustion"] which critics know as the Euripidean sophistry, . . . and which means the tendency of his characters to argue for argument's sake, to conduct the pleadings of passion like pleadings at the bar, to say everything which can be said."—*Sidney Colvin.*

"Generally speaking, where Lord Tennyson is meditative, Browning is argumentative, showing us his thought in process as it moves from point to point."—*Mary Wilson.*

"Mr. Browning's argumentative verse divides itself into two classes; those in which the speaker is defending a pre-conceived judgment, and an antagonist is implied, and those in which he is trying to form a judgment or accept one; and the supposed listener, if there be such, is only a confidant. The first kind of argument or discussion is carried on—apparently—as much for victory as for truth; and employs the weapons of satire or the tactics of special-pleading, as the case demands. The second is an often pathetic and always single-minded endeavor to get at the truth."—*Mrs. Sutherland Orr.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Your business is not to catch men with show,  
 With homage to the perishable clay,  
 But lift them over it, ignore it all,  
 Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.  
 Your business is to paint the souls of men—  
 Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no, it's not . . .  
 It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—  
 (In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)

It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul !  
 Give us no more of body than shows soul !  
 Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,  
 That sets us praising,—why not stop with him ?  
 Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head  
 With wonder at lines, colors, and what-not ?  
 Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms ! ”

—*Fra Lippo Lippi.*

“ As it was better, youth  
 Should strive, through acts uncouth,  
 Toward making than repose on aught found made :  
 So, better, age, exempt  
 From strife, should know than tempt  
 Further. Thou waitedst age : wait death nor be afraid !

“ Enough now, if the Right  
 And Good and Infinite  
 Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,  
 With knowledge absolute,  
 Subject to no dispute  
 From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.”

—*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

“ What of a villa ? Though winter be over in March by rights,  
 'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the  
 heights:

You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam  
 and wheeze,

And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

. . . . .  
 All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,  
 Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.  
 Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,  
 Or thrud the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.  
 Late August or early September the stunning cicada is shrill,  
 And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs  
 on the hill.

Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever  
 and chill.”—*Up at a Villa—Down in the City.*

**II. Dramatic Power.**—"Browning, when in a poem or drama he puts forth his peculiar power, when he writes with that motive which gives his work its singular value, is always dramatic. Whether he is so of purpose I shall not venture to say; but the seeming of his poetry is that it takes shape from a necessity of his moral nature, not from a deliberate intellectual preference."—*Richard Grant White.*

"It is customary to call Browning a dramatist, and without doubt he represents the dramatic element, such as it is, of the recent English school. He counts among his admirers many intellectual persons, some of whom pronounce him the greatest dramatic poet since Shakespeare, and one has said that 'it is to him that we must pay homage for whatever is good and great and profound in the second period of the poetic drama of England.' . . . Something of a dramatic character pertains to nearly all of Browning's lyrics. Like his wife, he has preferred to study human hearts rather than the forms of nature."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"It is sometimes also suggested that there are dramatic poets and dramatic poets; that, though Browning does not follow the modes of Shakespeare, he is in a certain sense, and in a very true sense, dramatic in spirit if not in form. But I do not think we see sufficient recognition of the fact that Browning works with quite a different intention to, and in quite a different manner from, Shakespeare; and must be judged by other standards, that is, by his own. . . . We see in Browning a drama of the interior, a tragedy or comedy of the soul. . . . The dramatic principles of Browning are not those of Shakespeare. Shakespeare makes his characters live; Browning makes his characters think."—*John Addington Symonds.*

"To us he appears to have a wider range and greater freedom of movement than any other of the younger English poets. In his dramas we find always a leading design and a conscious

subordination of all the parts to it. In each one of them, also, below the more apparent and exterior sources of interest we find an illustration of some general idea which bears only a philosophical relation to the particular characters, thoughts, and incidents, and without which the drama is still complete in itself, but which yet binds together and sustains the whole and conduces to that unity for which we esteem these works so highly. In another respect, Mr. Browning's dramatic power is rare. The characters of his women are finely discriminated. No two are alike, and yet the characteristic features of each are touched with the most delicate precision. By far the greater number of authors who have attempted female characters have given us mere automata. They think it enough if they make them subordinate to a generalized idea of human nature. Mr. Browning never forgets that women are women and not simply human beings; for there they occupy common ground with men. Many English dramas have been written within a few years, the authors of which have established their claim to the title of poet. We cannot but allow that we find in them fine thoughts finely expressed, passages of dignified and sustained eloquence, and as adequate a conception of character as the reading of history and the study of models will furnish. But it is only in Browning that we find enough of freshness, vigor, grasp, and of that clear insight and conception which enable the artist to construct characters from within and so to make them real things and not images, to warrant our granting the honor due to this dramatist."—*Lowell.*

"The dramatic element in Browning's poetry renders it difficult to construct his character from his works; . . . though a true dramatist, he is not like Shakespeare and Scott, whose characters seem never to have had an author."—*Henry James.*

"One critic calls him a dramatist, and so he is; for with the exception of Sir Henry Taylor's 'Philip Van Artevelde'

and Mr. Swinburne's 'Bothwell,' he has written the only works within this generation worthy of being called dramas."  
—*G. B. Smith.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" ' Now, don't, sir ! Don't expose me ! Just this once !  
This was the first and only time, I'll swear,—  
Look at me,—see, I kneel,—yes, by the soul  
Of her who hears—(your sainted mother, sir !)  
All, except this last accident, was truth—  
This little kind of slip !—and even this,  
It was your own wine, sir, the good champagne  
(I took it for Catawba, you're so kind),  
Which put the folly in my head !

" ' Get up ? '

You still inflict on me that terrible face ?  
You show no mercy ?—Not for her dear sake,  
The sainted spirit's, whose soft breath even now  
Blows on my cheek—(don't you feel something, sir ?)  
You'll tell ?

Go tell, then ! Who the Devil cares  
What such a rowdy chooses to . . .

Aie—aie—aie !

Please, sir ! your thumbs are through my windpipe, sir !  
Ch—ch !

" Well, sir, I hope you've done it now !  
O Lord ! I little thought, sir, yesterday,  
When your departed mother spoke those words  
Of peace through me, and moved you, sir, so much,  
You gave me—(very kind it was of you)  
These shirt-studs—(better take them back again,  
Please, sir)—yes, little did I think so soon  
A trifle of trick, all through a glass too much  
Of his own champagne, would change my best of friends  
Into an angry gentleman !"—*Mr. Sludge, The Medium.*

*Guendolen.*— “She’s dead  
Let me unlock her arms !”

*Tresham.*— “She threw them thus  
About my neck and blessed me, and then died.  
You’ll let them stay now, *Guendolen* !”

*Austin.*— “Leave her  
And look to him ! What ails you, *Thorold* ?”

*Guendolen.*— “White  
As she—and whiter ! *Austin*—quick—this side !”

*Austin.*—“A froth is oozing thro’ his clenched teeth—  
Both lips, where they’re not bitten thro’, are black !  
Speak, dearest *Thorold* !”

*Tresham.*— “Something does weigh down  
My neck besides her weight ; thanks ; I should fall  
But for you, *Austin*, I believe !—there, there—  
’Twill pass away soon !—Ah—I had forgotten—  
I am dying.”

*Guendolen.*— “*Thorold*—*Thorold*—why was this ?”

*Tresham.*—“I said, just as I drank the poison off,  
The earth would be no longer earth to me,  
The life out of all life was gone from me !  
There are blind ways provided, the foredone,  
Heart-weary player in this pageant world  
Drops out by letting the main masque defile  
By the conspicuous portal :—I am through—  
Just through !”—*A Blot on the ’Scutcheon.*

“You, now, so kind here, all you Florentines,  
What is it in your eyes . . . those lips, those brows . . .  
Nobody spoke it . . . yet I know it well !—  
Come now—this battle saves you, all’s at end,  
Your use of me is o’er, for good, for evil—  
Come now, what’s done against me, while I speak,  
In Florence ? Come ! I feel it in my blood,  
My eyes, my hair, a voice is in my ear  
That spite of all this smiling and kind speech  
You are betraying me ! What is it you do ?  
Have it your way, and think my use is over ;  
That you are saved and may throw off the mask—  
Have it my way, and think more work remains



Which I could do—so show you fear me not,  
 Or prudent be, or generous, as you choose,  
 But tell me—tell me what I refused to know  
 At noon, lest heart should fail me ! Well ? That letter ?  
 My fate is known at Florence ! What is it ? ”—*Luria.*

✓ **12. Mastery of Rhyme.**—“ There is no such extravagant and out-of-the-way word in the language that Browning will not find you a rhyme for, if not in one word, then in two, three, or four ; and if not in one language then in another.”—*Roden Noel.*

“ In one very important matter, that of rhyme, he is perhaps the greatest master of our language ; in single and double, in simple and grotesque alike, he succeeds in fitting rhyme to rhyme with a perfection which I have never found in any other poet of any age.”—*John Addington Symonds.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ But I think I gave you as good !  
     ‘ That foreign fellow,—who can know  
 How she pays, in a tuneful mood,  
     For his tuning her that piano ? ’

“ Could you say so, and never say  
     ‘ Suppose we join hands and fortunes,  
 And I fetch her from over the way,  
     Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes ? ’

. . . . .

“ But you meet the Prince at the Board,  
     I’m queen myself at *bals-pare*,  
 I’ve married a rich old lord,  
     And you’re dubbed knight and an R.A.”

—*Youth and Art.*

“ But where I begin my own narration  
 Is a little after I took my station  
 To breathe the fresh air from the balcony,  
 And, having in those days a falcon eye,

To follow the hunt thro' the open country,  
From where the bushes thinlier crested  
The hillocks, to a plain where's not one tree :—  
When, in a moment, my ear was arrested  
By—was it singing, or was it saying,  
Or a strange musical instrument playing  
In the chamber ?—and to be certain  
I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain."

—*The Flight of the Duchess.*

" But the most turned in yet more abruptly  
From a certain squalid knot of alleys,  
Where the town's bad blood once slept corruptly,  
Which now the little chapel rallies  
And leads into day again—its priestliness  
Lending itself to hide their beastliness  
So cleverly (thanks in part to the mason),  
And putting so cheery a whitewashed face on  
Those neophytes too much in lack of it,  
That, where you cross the common as I did,  
And meet the party thus presided,  
' Mount Zion ' with Love-lane at the back of it,  
They front you as little disconcerted  
As, bound for the hills, her fate averted,  
And her wicked people made to mind him,  
Lot might have marched with Gomorrah behind him."

—*Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day.*

## WHITTIER, 1807-1892

**Biographical Outline.**—John Greenleaf Whittier, born December 17, 1807, in the East Parish of Haverhill, Mass.; both parents strict Quakers; father a farmer of supposed Huguenot descent, living far from any neighbor and far from any school; Whittier works as a boy on his father's farm, where, through insufficient clothing and other unwise methods of "toughening" then in vogue among New England farmers, he sows the seeds of lifelong ill health; until his nineteenth year his only education is obtained at a district school, which is open but a small part of each year; his first literary inspiration comes from Burns, through the medium of a travelling Scotch pedler, and from Scott; as a school-boy he used to cover his slate with original rhymes instead of sums; during his early youth he writes much verse, but his father discourages the son's "foolish waste of time over his day-dreams;" his first published poem, "The Exile's Departure," was contributed anonymously, in 1826, to the *Free Press*, then recently established in Newburyport by William Lloyd Garrison; the merit of the poem is recognized by Garrison, who discovers its authorship, and, without invitation, visits Whittier on his father's farm; he finds the young poet hoeing corn and clad so poorly and meagrely that he at first declines to be presented to the young city editor, but afterward yields to the importunities of his sister Elizabeth; Garrison declares that Whittier "bids fair to become another Bernard Barton," and urges him to obtain a better education; Whittier's father is not pleased with the idea, as he is unable to aid his son, but the young poet learns from one of his father's farm-laborers the art of making ladies' slippers, and thus soon earns money enough to

pay for his board and tuition for six months at the then newly established academy at Haverhill; in May, 1827, soon after entering this school, he writes, by invitation, an ode to be sung at the dedication of the new academy building; from 1826 to 1830 he contributes to the *Essex Gazette* several poems, some of which are promptly plagiarized by city journals; two terms of six months each at the Haverhill Academy constitute Whittier's "higher education;" in the winter of 1827-28 he has his first and only experience as a teacher, taking charge of a district school in West Amesbury, near Merrimac.

Late in 1828 Whittier is offered, through Garrison, the editorship of the *Philanthropist*, a Boston journal—the first temperance paper ever published—and he begins his editorial work there January 1, 1829; after nine months in the Boston printing-office he is recalled to the home-farm by his father's illness, and he remains there till his father's death in January, 1830, meantime contributing much prose and verse to various periodicals; in 1832, on the nomination of Geo. D. Prentice, Whittier is made editor of the *New England Review*, published at Hartford; he accepts the position, but ill health soon compels him to resign it and to return to the farm-home; between 1829 and 1832 he writes over one hundred poems; in the spring of 1833, while still carrying on the farm, he writes and publishes at his own expense his great prose pamphlet "Justice and Expediency"—a step that marks specifically Whittier's adoption of Abolition tenets; this pamphlet was reprinted and scattered broadcast by other Abolitionists, and became decidedly the most influential paper of that decade for the advancement of the anti-slavery cause; most of the poems now published in Whittier's complete works under the title "Voices of Freedom" were written between 1833 and 1847, and were contributed to various journals; he is a delegate to the first national anti-slavery convention, in December, 1833, a member of the Massachusetts Legislature in

1834-35, and refuses a re-election for 1835-36; late in 1835 he narrowly escapes being mobbed for his anti-slavery views at Concord, N. H.

In the spring of 1836 the Haverhill farm is sold, and the poet buys a cottage at Amesbury, Mass., which remains his home during the rest of his life; in 1840, and for several years at that period, Whittier was practically the political leader of his congressional district, and was able to dictate to Caleb Cushing the conditions (relating to Cushing's attitude toward slavery) on which he might be re-elected to Congress; in 1836 he publishes "Mogg Megone" in pamphlet form at Boston—a poem that he afterward endeavored vainly to suppress; in 1837 he is in New York City, acting as one of the secretaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society; in March, 1838, he becomes the responsible editor of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, before edited by Benjamin Lundy under the name of the *National Enquirer*, and he holds this relation till 1840, though he is frequently compelled by ill health to return to Amesbury, sending thence by mail his contributions to the *Freeman*; when, in 1841, the pro-slavery mob burned Pennsylvania Hall, the famous building in which was the office of the *Freeman*, he saved his private papers at great personal risk, and the next day calmly issued the *Freeman* from another office; during an absence of Whittier at Amesbury in November, 1838, the agent of the Anti-Slavery Society of Pennsylvania issued a volume of his poems amounting to one hundred and fifty pages; of the fifty poems in this collection, none were published in the "Legends of New England," and only eleven of them are to be found in the complete edition of Whittier's works published fifty years afterward; the title-page of this first authorized collection of Whittier's poems, which he had collected during the summer of 1838, bears the text from Ecclesiastes iv. 1: "So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and, behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter;

and on the side of their oppressors there was power ; but they had no comforter ; " in July, 1839, increasing ill health compels him to give up his journalistic duties, and he makes a tour of Western Pennsylvania, seeking health and working for the anti-slavery cause wherever he goes ; later he arranges for petitions from every part of his congressional district, calling for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the restriction of the slave-trade ; these petitions are denied under a new congressional rule, whose author Whittier gives a terrible poetic castigation in the *Freeman* in January, 1839 ; in June, 1839, he is present at a national anti-slavery convention in Albany, and afterward visits Saratoga at the height of the season as " a laughing philosopher ; " thence by way of Newport and New York to Amesbury, where he remains till October, 1839, when he is again at his desk in Philadelphia.

In February, 1840, his physician declares that Whittier is affected with a serious heart trouble and that he must give up his editorial work ; he accordingly publishes his valedictory, February 20, 1840, and returns to Amesbury ; his continued ill health compels him to give up an intended visit to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London during the summer of 1840 ; he remains at Amesbury till April, 1841, when he goes to New York, meets Joseph Sturges, the English philanthropist, then visiting this country, and, with Sturges, visits Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and Washington ; while in Baltimore they visit several slave-pens ; Whittier entertains Sturges at Amesbury during the summer of 1841, and on his departure for England in August, Sturges leaves with Lewis Tappan \$1,000, to be used by Whittier in travelling or in any other way he may choose ; in October, 1842, Whittier receives from Lowell, then doing his first journalistic work as editor of a new Boston magazine called the *Pioneer*, a request for a poem, and sends him the lines entitled " To a Friend on his Return from Europe ; " Whittier's poem " Massachusetts to Virginia," first published in the *Liberator*, Janu-

ary 27, 1843, without his name, was inspired by the trial of a fugitive slave in Boston, and was at once recognized as Whittier's work; in May, 1843, Ticknor & Fields issue a volume of his poems entitled "Lays of My Home and Other Poems"—the first of his published works from which Whittier realized any financial return, as all of his poems previously published had been sold for the benefit of "the cause;" all the twenty-three poems in this volume have been retained in the poet's complete works; the first four of his "Songs of Labor" were contributed to the *Democratic Review* in 1845 and 1846; the rest appeared in the *National Era* under Whittier's editorship; in March, 1844, at the request of Lowell, he wrote "Texas" and "The Voice of New England."

For several weeks during 1844 Whittier resides in Boston, editing the *Middlesex Sentinel*; for about two years at this period he was also virtually editor of the *Essex* (Amesbury) *Transcript*, though his name did not appear as editor; he wrote "in a beautiful flowing hand, with seldom an emendation or any interlining;" his series of papers entitled "The Stranger in Lowell" were first printed in the *Transcript* and afterward appeared in book form; during the year 1845 he aids in the campaign of the Free Soil Party with vigorous satirical verse, much of it written anonymously; when the *National Era* is established at Washington as the leading anti-slavery organ, in 1847, Whittier becomes assistant or corresponding editor, and continues to hold this position till 1860; his relation to the paper enables him to retain his residence at Amesbury, where the ministrations of his mother and sister contribute much to the preservation of his health; he writes "Randolph of Roanoke" in January, 1847, and "The Pine Tree" in September following; from 1847 to 1859 the *Era* contained over eighty of Whittier's poems, including "Barclay of Ury," "The Angels of Buena Vista," "Ichabod," "Maud Muller," and "The Witch's

Daughter," but the bulk of his work during these years was done in prose; his most notable prose work of this period was "Margaret Smith's Journal," really an historical novel, first published serially in the *Era* and afterward reprinted in book form by Ticknor & Fields, in 1849; Whittier frequently filled from eight to ten pages of a single issue of the *Era* with his own prose contributions; in 1849 his poems are issued in a fine illustrated octavo volume, which passes rapidly through three editions, and brings to Whittier a considerable financial return; in 1850 another volume appears containing the "Songs of Labor" and twenty-one miscellaneous poems; in 1850 Whittier also publishes his prose volume entitled "Old Portraits and Modern Sketches;" during 1850 also, against Sumner's will, Whittier persuades him to accept the Free Soil nomination for United States Senator—a nomination that results in an election, and so is the beginning of Sumner's career as a statesman; during the summer of 1850 Whittier entertains Lowell and Bayard Taylor at Amesbury; he is severely ill early in 1851; he contributes "Moloch in State Street" to the *Era* in May, 1852; "The Panorama," written in 1855, was first published in 1856 in a small volume containing also the poems entitled "A Memory," "Burns," "Tauler," "The Barefoot Boy," and "The Kansas Emigrants;" during 1856 he first takes a public stand in favor of woman suffrage, and supports Fremont, writing for the campaign the poems entitled "What of the Day?" "The Pass of the Sierra," "To Pennsylvania," "A Song for the Time," and that beginning "Beneath thy Skies, November;" "The Mayflower" was also written in 1856; in 1857 Whittier loses his mother, to whom he had been intensely devoted, and Ticknor & Fields publish, at his request, the complete "blue and gold" edition of his poems; he urges the omission of "Mogg Megone" from this edition, but Fields insists on retaining it; Whittier, however, insists on omitting the poems entitled "The Response," "Stanzas



for the Times, 1844," "Address at the Opening of Pennsylvania Hall," and "The Album;" the second and third of this list of poems were retained in the edition of 1888.

In 1857 Whittier aids in organizing the *Atlantic Monthly*, and at the editorial rooms in Boston he frequently meets Emerson, Mrs. Stowe, Lowell, Theodore Parker, Holmes, Prescott, Motley, Norton, and other eminent contributors, although, because of his delicate health, he is seldom present at any of the famous monthly dinners given by the *Atlantic*; among his early poems in the *Atlantic* are the one on the laying of the first ocean cable, "The Pipes at Lucknow," and "Skipper Ireson's Ride;" in 1860 he publishes a volume entitled "Home Ballads, Poems, and Lyrics," opening with "The Witch's Daughter," afterward called "Mabel Martin," and containing also "The Prophecy of Samuel Sewell," "The Preacher," "To G. B. C.," "Brown of Ossawatimie," "From Perugia," "The Peace of Europe," and "The Prisoners of Naples;" in January, 1861, he voices his protest against war in the poem "A Word for the Hour;" in February, 1862, he publishes in the *Atlantic* his "Negro Boat Song at Port Royal;" during the early years of the war he writes also "Thy Will be Done," "The Battle Autumn of 1862," "*Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott*," and "The Watchers;" in 1863 he publishes a volume entitled "In War Time and Other Poems," including those just mentioned and "Amy Wentworth," "Mountain Pictures," "The Laurels," and "Barbara Frietchie;" "Barbara Frietchie" first appears in the *Atlantic* in September, 1863, and Whittier receives for the manuscript \$150; during the same month he commends the famous "emancipation proclamation" of Fremont; on receiving, in January, 1864, \$340 as his first royalties on the volume "In War Time," he writes, "It makes me rich as Croesus;" his sister Elizabeth dies September 3, 1864, and he writes, "The great motive of life seems lost;" three weeks later he sends to the *Atlantic*

"The Vanishers;" in 1864 he publishes "The Mantle of St. John de Matha" and in 1865 "The Changeling," both in the *Atlantic*; on hearing of the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery in the United States, in February, 1865, he sends to the *Independent* "*Laus Deo*."

He begins "Snow Bound"—really a memorial tribute to his mother and sister—in the summer of 1865, and writes to Fields, "If I ever finish, I hope and trust it will be good;" he sends it to Fields, October 3, 1865, but Fields returns it with suggestions for several changes, most of which Whittier adopts; the poem is published early in 1866, and Whittier's share of the profits of the first issue are \$10,000; between 1832 and 1865, besides an enormous amount of prose, he had written nearly three hundred poems, one-third of them relating directly or indirectly to slavery; in July, 1866, he writes to a friend: "If my health allowed me to write, I could make money easily now, as my anti-slavery reputation does not injure me in the least at the present time. For twenty years I was shut out from the favor of booksellers and magazine editors, but I was enabled by rigid economy to live in spite of them and to see the end of the infernal institution that proscribed me; thank God for it!" he begins the final arrangement of "The Tent on the Beach" in the summer of 1866, but ill health compels him to lay it aside; in September, 1866, he sends to Mrs. Fields the little poem "Our Master;" during the same year appears a two-volume edition of his prose works; he completes "The Tent on the Beach" in December, and it appears in February, 1867, and sells, at first, at the rate of one thousand copies a day; about this time Whittier describes himself as "a bundle of nerves for pain to experiment on;" he writes "The Palatine" in August, 1867, and meets Dickens in Boston during the following December, though ill health prevents him from attending the readings of the novelist; he is very ill during the winter of 1867-68.

An illustrated edition of Whittier's poems is published in 1868 under the title "Among the Hills and Other Poems;" "The Clear Vision" appears in the *Atlantic* in April, 1868; the poem entitled "Among the Hills" first appeared in the *Atlantic* in June, 1868, under the title of "The Wife: An Idyll of Bearchamp Water," and was but half as long as in its present form; during 1869 and 1870 Whittier writes "Howard at Atlanta," "Marguerite," "The Pageant," and "In School Days;" during middle and later life he could not write or read for half an hour continuously without suffering a severe headache—a fact that accounts for much of Whittier's seeming diffidence on public occasions; he was also color-blind and in later life somewhat deaf; in 1871 he publishes a volume entitled "Miriam and Other Poems;" in 1871 he edits "John Woolman's Journal" and a collection of juvenile poems called "Child Life in Song," and translates into English verse the Danish story of "Volmer and Elsie;" in 1872 he publishes "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim" in a volume with "Volmer and Elsie" and a dozen other poems; in August of this year he receives a severe shock when his house is struck by lightning; during 1872 and 1873 he labors earnestly to secure the rescinding of the legislative enactment censuring Sumner for favoring the return of the Confederate flags; the effort fails at first, but Whittier finally succeeds, and the act is rescinded; late in 1873 he writes the ode now known as "A Christmas Carmen," and sends it anonymously to Gilmore, the bandmaster of the great Peace Jubilee, who rejects the ode; in 1874 Whittier writes but throws aside his poem entitled "A Sea Dream," saying that it is "a poem that the world can do without;" in its place he sends to the *Atlantic* his "Golden Wedding of Longwood;" during 1874 he also adds eighty lines to "The Witch's Daughter," and rechristens it "Mabel Martin;" early in 1875 he entertains at Amesbury Garrison, Elizur Wright, and Samuel Sewell, and speaks of the quartette as "four gray old abo-

litionists, dating back to 1832;" he sends "Lexington, 1775," to the *Atlantic* in March, 1875; during this year he also publishes the collection of poems called "Hazel Blossoms," and collaborates with Lucy Larcom in editing "Songs of Three Centuries;" early in 1876, after Bryant, Lowell, and Holmes had declined to write the hymn for the opening of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, Whittier yields to importunities of his intimate friend, Bayard Taylor, and writes the hymn for that occasion; his niece Lizzie, who had been the poet's housekeeper since the death of his sister, was married in April, 1876, and thereafter Whittier made his home during a large part of each year with three cousins—the Misses Johnson and Miss Woodman—at Danvers, Mass., in a house to which he gave the name of "Oak Knoll;" he really spent but little time at Amesbury during his later years, but he retained his citizenship and his property there; during the summer of 1876, by special appointment, Whittier meets Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, who was a warm admirer of the Quaker poet; during his later years Whittier's favorite summer residence is at the Bearchamp House, at West Ossipee, N. H., where he writes "Among the Hills," "Sunset on the Bearchamp," "Seeking a Waterfowl," and "The Voyage of the Jettie;" he publishes "The Witch of Wenham" in the *Atlantic* in April, 1876; in 1877, in response to tributes to Whittier on his seventieth birthday, written for the *Literary World* by a score of the most eminent American writers, he writes the sonnet beginning "Beside the milestone, where the level sun."

Whittier remained an optimist till the end, and wrote to a friend in 1881, "The Lord reigns; our old planet is wheeling slowly into fuller light. I despair of nothing good." The tributes to his fame and genius during his later years from all classes of people were both numerous and significant; during 1883 he publishes the volume called "The Bay of Seven Islands and Other Poems," and writes for the *Atlantic*

the poem "At Last;" in 1885, at Tennyson's request, Whittier writes the inscription for General Gordon's cenotaph in Westminster; in 1886 he publishes a volume entitled "Saint Gregory's Quest and Other Poems"—sixteen poems, nearly all written after his seventy-fifth year; during his last three years he remains much at Amesbury, saying, "I seem nearer to my mother and sister here;" during 1888 he revises the proofs of his poems and prose works for the complete seven-volume "Riverside" edition of his works, saying, "I have a strong desire to drown some of them [the poems] like so many kittens;" during 1890 he publishes for private circulation among his friends the little volume of his earliest verses entitled "At Sundown," which appeared publicly two years later; in 1891 he writes to Holmes concerning death, "I await the call with a calm trust in the eternal goodness;" during 1891 he writes his lines on Lowell and the poems "The Birthday Wreath" and "Between the Gates;" during the summer of 1892 he revises the proofs of his volume "At Sundown;" he suffers a paralytic shock on September 3, 1892, and dies peacefully at Hampton Falls, N. H., September 7, 1892, while a relative recites his poem "At Last."

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

**I. Idyllic Flavor—Homely Beauty.**—"Of our leading poets, Whittier was almost the only one who learned Nat-

ure by working with her at all seasons, under the sky and in the wood and field. . . . While chanting in behalf of every patriotic or human effort of his time, he has been the truest singer of our homestead or wayside life, and has rendered all the legends of his region into familiar verse. . . . As a bucolic poet of his own section, rendering its pastoral life and aspect, Whittier surpasses all rivals. . . . To read his verse was to recall the scent of the clover and apple-bloom, to hear again the creak of the well-pole, the rattle of bars in the lane—the sights and freshness of youth passing for a moment, a vision of peace over their battle-field.”—*E. C. Stedman*.

“Whittier, on the whole, has lived nearer the homely heart and life of his northern countrymen than any other American poet save Longfellow. . . . Unvexed by literary envy and oblivious to mere fame, he became the laureate of the ocean beach, the inland lake, the little wood flower, and the divine sky.”—*C. F. Richardson*.

“It is not without perfect justice that ‘Snow-Bound’ takes rank with ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’ and ‘The Deserted Village;’ it belongs in this group as a faithful picture of humble life. . . . All his affection for the soil on which he was born went into it; and no one ever felt more deeply that attachment to the region of his birth which is the great spring of patriotism. . . . It is the New England home entire, with its characteristic scenes, its incidents of household life, its Christian virtues.”—*G. E. Woodberry*.

“Like Burns and Cowper, Whittier is distinctively a rustic poet. . . . His idyllic poetry savors of the soil and is full of local allusions. . . . There are trees and trees at Oak Knoll. . . . The house is of wood. . . . In front a luxuriant vine clusters about the eaves. On the front porch a mocking-bird and a canary-bird fill the green silence with gushes of melody; and near at hand, in his study in the wing of the building, sits one with a singing pen and listens to their song. To their song and to the murmur of the tall pines by

his window he listens, then looks into his heart and writes—this sweet-souled magician—and craftily imprisons between the covers of his books echoes of bird and tree music, bits of blue sky, glimpses of green landscape, winding rivers, and idyls of the snow—all suffused and interfused with a glowing atmosphere of human and divine love.”—*W. S. Kennedy*.

“Throughout the work of his sixty-seven years one feels with growing admiration a constant simplicity of feeling and of phrase, as pure as the country air he loved to breathe.”—*Barrett Wendell*.

“So far as flavor of the soil went, he was far beyond Longfellow or Holmes or Lowell.”—*T. W. Higginson*.

“The poet himself calls the scenes in ‘Snow-Bound’ Flemish pictures; and it is true they have much of the homely fidelity of Teniers, but they are far more than literal representations. The scenes glow with ideal beauty—all the more for their bucolic tone. The works and ways of the honest people are almost photographically revealed.”—*F. H. Underwood*.

“The birds which carolled over his head, the flowers which grew under his feet, were as poetic as those to which the Scottish ploughman had given perennial interest. Burns taught him to detect the beautiful in the common.”—*E. P. Whipple*.

“This exquisite poem [“Snow-Bound”] has no prototype in English literature, unless Burns’s “Cotter’s Saturday Night” be one, and it will be long, I fear, before it has a companion-piece. It can be fully appreciated only by those who are New England born and on whose heads the snows of fifty or sixty winters have fallen.”—*R. H. Stoddard*.

“There is no custom of the country, common and simple as it may be, sugar-camp and sleigh-ride, husking; apple-paring, and the telling of the bees, that he does not fling his charm about it.”—*Harriet Prescott Spofford*.



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" It was the pleasant harvest-time,  
When cellar-bins are closely stowed,  
And garrets bend beneath their load,

" And the old swallow-haunted barns—  
Brown-gabled, long, and full of seams  
Through which the moted sunlight streams,

" And winds blow freshly in, to shake  
The red plumes of the roosted cocks,  
And the loose hay-mow's scented locks—

" Are filled with summer's ripened stores,  
Its odorous grass and barley sheaves,  
From their low scaffolds to their eaves."

—*The Witch's Daughter.*

" We fished her little trout-brook, knew  
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,  
What sunny hillsides, autumn-brown,  
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,  
Saw where in sheltered cove and bay  
The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,  
And heard the wild geese calling loud  
Beneath the gray November cloud."—*Snow-Bound.*

" Here is the place ; right over the hill  
Runs the path I took ;  
You can see the gap in the old wall still,  
And the stepping-stones in the shallow brook.

" There is the house, with the gate red-barred,  
And the poplars tall ;  
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,  
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

" There are the bee-hives ranged in the sun ;  
And down by the brink  
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed-o'errun,  
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink."

—*Telling the Bees.*

## 2. Moral Energy — Vehemence — Intensity. —

At first, the reader is inclined to think vehemence the most essential quality of Whittier's style ; but a more careful reflection will convince him that the critics are right in maintaining that his idyls will live long after his trumpet-blasts against slavery have been forgotten.

“What is the great central element in our poet's character, if it is not that deep, never-smouldering moral fervor, that unquenchable love of freedom, that

‘Hate of tyranny, intense  
And hearty in its vehemence,’

which, mixed with the beauty and melody of his soul, gives to his pages a delicate glow as of gold-hot iron ; which crowned him the laureate of freedom in his day, and imparts to his utterances the manly ring of the prose of Milton and Hugo and the poetry of Byron, Swinburne, and Whitman—all poets of freedom like himself? . . . He is occasionally nerved to almost superhuman effort ; it is the battle-axe of Richard thundering at the gates of Front de Bœuf. . . . Never ceasing to express his high-born soul in burning invective and scathing satire against the oppressor. . . . Another powerful group of these anti-slavery poems is constituted by the scornful mock-congratulatory productions ; such as the ‘Hunters of Men,’ ‘Clerical Oppressors,’ ‘The Yankee Girl,’ ‘A Sabbath Scene,’ ‘Lines suggested by Reading a State Paper wherein the Higher Law is Invoked to Sustain the Lower One,’ and ‘The Pastoral Letter.’ The sentences in these stanzas cut like knives and sting like shot.”—*W. S. Kennedy.*

“Whittier had always lived in a region of moral ideas, and this anti-slavery inspiration inflamed his moral ideas into moral passion and moral wrath. If Garrison may be considered the prophet of anti-slavery and Phillips its orator and Mrs. Stowe its novelist and Sumner its statesman, there can be no doubt that Whittier was its poet. Quaker as he

was, his martial lyrics had something of the energy of the primitive bard urging on hosts to battle. Every word was a blow. . . . He roused, condensed, and elevated the public sentiment against slavery. The poetry was as genuine as the wrath was terrific, and many a political time-server who was proof against Garrison's hottest denunciations and Phillips's most stinging invectives, quailed before Whittier's smiting rhymes. . . . He seems, in some of his lyrics, to pour out his blood with his lines. There is a rush of passion in his verse which sweeps everything along with it. . . . The strong qualities of his mind, acting at the suggestion of conscience, produce a kind of military morality which uses all the deadly arms of verbal warfare. . . . His invective is merciless and undistinguishing; he almost screams with rage and indignation."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes;  
Not his best, though; for those are struck off at white heats  
When the heart in his breast like a trip-hammer beats,  
And could ne'er be repeated again any more  
Than they could have been carefully plotted before."

—*James Russell Lowell*.

"That one [poem] entitled simply 'Stanzas,' has an almost terrible force. . . . Evidently written in a white heat, the language is at once terse and vehement, and the sound of the lines is like the clashing of swords. The thoughts and emotions are sublime, as happens only in the most exalted state of the creative soul. Such a poem could never have been *composed*. It is as difficult to quote from it as to give a segment of a moving wave of lava. . . . What a pleasure—and what a surprise—it would be to see such vigorous strokes in a magazine to-day. . . . It ["Ichabod"] contains more storages of electric energy than any we remember in our time. . . . The reply of Whittier ["The Pastoral Letter"] is filled with grim sarcasm and indignant invective. . . . The lines hit like rapier thrusts."—*F. H. Underwood*.

"Peaceful thy message, yet for struggling right—  
When slavery's gauntlet in our face was flung—  
While timid weaklings watched the dubious fight  
No herald's challenge more defiant rung."

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

"Nothing can exceed, nothing can equal, the wild power of some of these songs ["Voices of Freedom"], now soaring in scorn, now writhing in angry shame, rising with indignant outcry, burning in fiery eloquence; and all moving to the magic of music and the pathos of their undercurrent of sorrow."—*Harriet Prescott Spofford.*

"Whittier is a poet militant, a crusader, whose moral weapons—since he must disown the carnal—were keen of edge and seldom in their scabbards. . . . At an age when bardlings are making sonnets to a mistress's eyebrow, he was facing mobs at Plymouth, Boston, Philadelphia. . . . The poet's deep-voiced scorn rendered his anti-slavery verse a very different thing from Longfellow's, and made the hearer sure of his 'effectual calling.' "—*E. C. Stedman.*

"His anti-slavery poems were earnest and indignant; earnest in their maintenance of the freedom of all men without regard to color, and indignant at the persecutions of those who sought to restore the rights which had been wrested from them. . . . Holding the opinions that he did, and having the temperament that he had, Mr. Whittier could no more have stifled his fiery denunciations of slavery than the old Hebrew seers could have stifled their dark and fateful prophecies."—*R. H. Stoddard.*

"Some of his most indignant and sharpest invective was directed against Pope Pius IX., who stood to Whittier as the very type of that Christian obstructiveness to the work of Christ which in a lesser degree he had seen in his own country, and had seen always only to express the heart-felt scorn which descended to him with his Quaker birthright."—*G. E. Woodberry.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" My brain took fire : ' Is this,' I cried,  
 ' The end of prayer and preaching ?  
 Then down with pulpit, down with priest,  
 And give us Nature's teaching !'

" Foul shame and scorn be on ye all  
 Who turn the good to evil,  
 And steal the Bible from the Lord,  
 And give it to the Devil !

" Than garbled text or parchment law  
 I own a statute higher ;  
 And God is true, though every book  
 And every man 's a liar."—*A Sabbath Scene.*

" Is the old Pilgrim spirit quenched within us,  
 Stoops the strong manhood of our souls so low,  
 That Mammon's lure or Party's wile can win us  
 To silence now ?

" What ! shall we henceforth humbly ask as favors  
 Rights all our own ? In madness shall we barter,  
 For treacherous peace, the freedom Nature gave us,  
 God and our charter ?"—*A Summer.*

" And what are ye who strive with God  
 Against the ark of his salvation,  
 Moved by the breast of prayer abroad,  
 With blessings for a dying nation ?  
 What, but the stubble and the hay  
 To perish, even as flax consuming,  
 With all that bars His glorious way,  
 Before the brightness of His coming ?"  
 —*The Pastoral Letter.*

3. Faith—Religious Fervor—Piety.—" It is characteristic of the man that his first poem should be of a religious nature. . . . The impression made upon the mind is one of harmony and solemn stateliness, not unlike that of

'Thanatopsis,' composed by Bryant when he was about the same age as was Whittier when he wrote the 'Deity.' . . . Many of Whittier's purely religious poems are among the most exquisite and beautiful ever written. The tender feeling, the warm-hearted trustfulness, and the reverent touch of his hymns speak directly to our hearts."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"Whittier, though creedless, is one of the most religious of our poets. . . . In these days of scepticism as to the possibility of the communication of the Divine Mind with the human, it is consolation to read his poem on 'The Eternal Goodness,' especially this stanza —

'I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air ;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.' "

—*E. P. Whipple.*

"In the popular sense of the word, Whittier has no theology. It was one of the secrets of his great religious influence that he sang only of the simple essentials of faith. . . . As he did not write of small subjects, so he did not take small views of large subjects. He was as free from the cage of sectarianism as a Danvers thrush rising from the tree-tops of Oak Knoll on a May morning. He soared when he sang. He poured out the truths that men must live by and that they can afford to die by or die for. . . . I have sometimes thought that I would rather give a man on the verge of a great moral lapse a marked copy of Whittier than any other book in our language. In a word, he represents the broadest, because he represents the purest elements of life."—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

"Not thine to lean on priesthood's broken reed ;  
No barriers cage thee in a bigot's fold.  
Did zealots ask to syllable thy creed,  
Thou saidst 'Our Father,' and thy creed was told."

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

"Whittier is the most religious of secular poets, . . . the Galahad of modern poets, not emasculate, but vigorous and pure; he has borne the Christian's shield of faith and sword of the Spirit. . . . Whittier's religious mood is far from being superficial and temporary. It is the life of his genius, out of which flow his ideas of earthly and heavenly content. . . . It is difficult to see how a poem for sacred music, or for such an occasion, could be more adequately wrought [than Whittier's "Centennial Hymn."] . . . In fine, the element of faith gives a tone to the whole range of his verse both religious and secular."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"The faith that lifts, the courage that sustains,  
 These thou wert sent to teach:  
 Hot blood of battle beating in thy veins,  
 Is twinned to a gentle speech."

—*Bayard Taylor*.

"His lyrics and idyls of the plain New England home, and his serene hymns of religious trust, rise from the pure depths of a sincere soul."—*C. F. Richardson*.

"Whittier, alone, is religious in a high and inward sense. . . . Some imperfections cling to all souls; but few have been observed in our time so well poised, so pure, and so stainless as his. . . . The 'Occasional Poems' are characterized by an intense religious feeling, which melts the heart of any man who has lived among primitive Christians and known what simple and natural piety is. . . . The religious element in Whittier's poems is something vital and inseparable. The supremacy of moral ideas is indeed inculcated by almost all great poets."—*F. H. Underwood*.

"Whatever else Whittier was, he was a profoundly religious man, who could not help taking life in earnest."—*Barrett Wendell*.

"His expression of the religious feeling is always noble and impressive. He is one of the very few whose poems, written under the fervor of religious emotion, have taken a higher

range and become true hymns. Several of these are already adopted into the books of praise."—*G. E. Woodberry.*

"Through all his work runs the deep religious sense of rest in the shadow of the Everlasting Wings, despite his struggles, and let what will betide."—*Harriet Prescott Spofford.*

If the consensus of criticism were wanting at this point, the poet has given us the following picture of his own religious nature in the beautiful poem entitled "My Namesake : "

- " He worshipped as his fathers did,  
 And kept the faith of childish days,  
 And, howsoe'er he strayed or slid,  
 He loved the good old ways.
- " While others trod the altar stairs  
 He faltered like the publican ;  
 And, while they praised as saints, his prayers  
 Were those of sinful man.
- " For, awed by Sinai's Mount of Law,  
 The trembling faith alone sufficed,  
 That, through its cloud and flame, he saw  
 The sweet, sad face of Christ."

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- " I see the wrong that round me lies,  
 I feel the guilt within ;  
 I hear, with groan and travail-cries,  
 The world confess its sin.
- " Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
 And tossed by storm and flood,  
 To one fixed trust my spirit clings :  
 I know that God is good !
- " I long for household voices gone ;  
 For vanished smiles I long,  
 But God hath led my dear ones on,  
 And He can do no wrong.

—*The Eternal Goodness.*



" I have no answer for myself or thee,  
 Save that I learned beside my mother's knee ;  
 ' All is of God that is, and is to be ;  
 And God is good.' Let this suffice us still,  
 Resting in childlike trust upon his will  
 Who moves to his great ends unthwarted by the ill."  
— *Trust.*

" We see not, know not ; all our way  
 Is night,—with Thee alone is day ;  
 From out the torrent's troubled drift,  
 Above the storm our prayers we lift :  
 Thy will be done.

" We take with solemn thankfulness  
 Our burden up, nor ask it less,  
 And count it joy that even we  
 May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,  
 Whose will be done."—*Thy Will Be Done.*

4. **Humanitarianism—Sympathy.**—In the poem entitled " My Namesake " Whittier justly says of himself :

" He loved the good and wise, but found  
 His human heart to all akin  
 Who met him on the common ground  
 Of suffering and sin.

" Whate'er his neighbor might endure  
 Of pain or grief his own became ;  
 For all the ills he could not cure  
 He held himself to blame."

" It will be seen that Whittier has not limited his sympathies to oppressed Africans nor even to his own persecuted people ; his generous spirit takes in the whole of suffering humanity. The wrongs of the Indian are often dwelt upon by him ; the prisoner for debt has a share of his pity ; and with all his energy he has protested against capital punishment for crime. . . . [He is] a chivalrous philanthropist—pour-

ing out his whole heart in lyrics for the poor and oppressed.”  
—*F. H. Underwood.*

“It has been said until it says itself that Whittier was the people's poet. This is true ; but he was more than that. He was the poet of a broad humanity. . . . He spent himself on the great needs of humanity, and the great heart of humanity answered him. He went to that as straight as a cry of nature ; and he uplifted it as truly as the hand of Heaven. The common people heard him gladly. He stands apart in their choice and their affection, even from the dearest of their great plutarchy of American poets to which he belonged. . . . The people loved him because he loved the people. It was his honor that he loved them nobly. He did not sink to their small or special phases. He sings to the strength, not to the weakness of the soul ; he does not conciliate passion and surrender ; he suggests prayer and power ; and as a substitute for temptation he enforces aspiration.”  
—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

“It was no personal ambition that made Whittier the psalmist of the anti-slavery movement. . . . The suffering of man for man, the cry of the human, never fail to move him. He celebrates all brave deeds and acts of renunciation. The heroism of martyrs and resisters, of the Huguenots, the Vaudois, the Quakers, the English reformers, serves him for many a ballad. . . . His most vivid pictures are of scenes which lie near his heart and relate to common life—to the love and longing, the simple joys and griefs of his neighbors at work and rest and worship.”—*E. C. Stedman.*

“Wherever he discovers the talisman of intellect he recognizes a brother. . . . He gives to humanity the songs he might have given to the eternal art.”—*C. F. Richardson.*

“There is room, even in the United States, for such a function as that of poet of the people ; and here Whittier filled a mission apart from that of the other members of his particular group of New England bards.”—*T. W. Higginson.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Than web of Persian loom most rare,  
     Or soft divan,  
 Better the rough rock, bleak and bare,  
 Or hollow tree which man may share  
     With suffering man.

. . . . .

" I hear another voice : ' The poor  
     Are thine to feed ;  
 Turn not the outcast from thy door,  
 Nor give to bonds and wrong once more  
     Whom God hath freed.' "

—*In the Evil Days.*

" Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,—  
     Ye heed no idle scorner ;  
 Free hands and hearts are still your pride  
     And duty done, your honor." .

—*The Shoemakers.*

" In thy lone and long night-watches, sky above and sea below,  
 Thou didst learn a higher wisdom than the babbling schoolmen  
     know ;  
 God's stars and silence taught thee, as his angels only can,  
 That the one sole sacred thing beneath the cope of heaven is  
     man."—*The Branded Hand.*

" For gifts in His name of food and rest  
 The tents of Islam of God are blest ;  
 Thou who hast faith in the Christ above,  
 Shall the Koran teach thee the Law of Love ?—  
 O Christian !—open thy heart and door,  
 Cry east and west to the wandering poor :  
     ' Whoever thou art whose need is great,  
     In the name of Christ the Compassionate  
     And Merciful One, for thee I wait ! ' "—*Charity.*

**5. Consecration—Inspiration.**—Like Milton, Whittier seems continually to be impressed with the thought that he has been divinely called and set apart for his high mission of song. Oliver Johnson has called him “the Prophet Bard of America.”

“The singer would seem to have felt himself set apart for God’s great purposes; he knew the burden of the prophet, and the vision of Ezekiel had been his; and, like one who is an instrument in the use of Powers above and beyond, he sighs,

‘Oh, not of choice for themes of public wrong  
I leave the green and pleasant paths of song.’”

—*Harriet Prescott Spofford.*

The same estimate of Whittier has prompted Stedman to address to him a volume of poems, with the inscription “*Ad Vatem.*” “For surely,” adds Stedman, “no aged servant, his eyes having seen in good time the Lord’s salvation, ever was more endowed with the love and reverence of a chosen people.” Lowell, too, implies the same estimate when he addresses Whittier as follows:

“All honor and praise to the right-hearted bard,  
Who was true to the Voice when such service was hard.”

“Poetry seems never to have been a pursuit to him, but a charge which was intrusted to him and which he had to deliver when the spirit moved him, well or ill, as it happened; but honestly, earnestly, and prayerfully.”—*R. H. Stoddard.*

“They [“Voices of Freedom”] were uttered at the call of duty and encouraged by the heavenly influences. The burden was upon the poet as upon the prophets of the Jews. Whittier never faltered in his mission. . . . His work in this world . . . has been inspired always by God and humanity. . . . He was a psalmist under a divine call.”

—*F. H. Underwood.*

“The necessity laid on him as a poet was accepted by

Whittier with the glad and solemn earnestness of a prophet ; and for sixty years he was more influential as a teacher of religion than any other man in America."—*W. S. Kennedy*.

"In his outbursts against oppression and his cries unto the Lord, we recognize the prophetic fervor, still nearer its height in some of his personal poems, which popular instinct long ago attributed to him."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Whittier was not only the trumpeter of the Abolitionists, in those dark but splendid days of fighting positive and tangible wrong ; he was the very trumpet itself, and he must have felt sometimes that the breath of the Lord blew through him."—*R. W. Gilder*.

"Hermit of Amesbury, thou too hast heard,  
Voices and melodies from beyond the gates,  
And speakest only when thy soul is stirred."

—*Longfellow*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"So let it be. In God's own might  
We gird us for the coming fight,  
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours,  
In conflict with unholy powers,  
We grasp the weapons He has given :  
The Light and Truth and Love of Heaven."

—*The Moral Warfare*.

"And if, in our unworthiness,  
Thy sacrificial wine we press ;  
If from Thy ordeal's heated bars  
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,  
Thy will be done !

"If, for the age to come, this hour  
Of trial hath vicarious power,  
And, blest by Thee, our present pain  
Be Liberty's eternal gain,  
Thy will be done !

“Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,  
 The anthem of the destinies !  
 The minor of Thy loftier strain,  
 Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain :  
 Thy will be done !”—*Thy Will be Done.*

“We wait beneath the furnace-blast  
 The pangs of transformation ;  
 Not painlessly doth God recast  
 And mould anew the nation.  
 Hot burns the fire  
 Where wrongs expire ;  
 Nor spares the hand  
 That from the land  
 Uproots the ancient evil.

“Then let the selfish lip be dumb,  
 And hushed the breath of sighing ;  
 Before the joy of peace must come  
 The pains of purifying.  
 God give us grace  
 Each in his place  
 To bear his lot,  
 And, murmuring not,  
 Endure and wait and labor !”

—*Luther's Hymn.*

**6. Nationalism—Sectionalism.**—When Whittier was but thirty-nine years old, Griswold said of him : “He may reasonably be styled a national poet. His works breathe affection for and faith in our republican polity and unshackled religion.” The later productions of the poet have caused both American and foreign critics to adopt Griswold’s estimate. But Whittier is national *because* he is sectional—because the profoundest moral and political ideas of his particular section have gradually permeated the entire Union. Francis Parkman once toasted the Quaker poet as follows : “The Poet of New England. His genius drew its nourishment from her

soil; his pages are the mirror of her outward nature and the strong utterance of her inward life."

"From the day, now more than thirty years ago, when he wrote :

' For a pale hand was beckoning  
The Huguenot on,  
And in blackness and ashes  
Behind was St. John,'

to his last idyl of New England life, he has rarely chosen a foreign theme, however seductive, or an ancient legend, unless it could be made to embody some aspiration of his large and loving humanity."—*Bayard Taylor*.

"Whittier was distinctively a local poet, a New Englander; but to acknowledge this does not diminish his honor, nor is he thereby set in a secondary place. . . . New England had, moreover, this advantage, that it was destined to set the stamp of its character upon the larger nation in which it was an element; so that if Whittier be regarded, as he sometimes is, as a representative American poet, it is not without justice. He is really national so far as the spirit of New England has passed into the nation at large. . . . There can be little question too, that he is a representative of a far larger portion of the American people than any other of the elder poets."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

Stedman indorses Parkman in calling Whittier the "poet of New England;" but he qualifies this estimate of Whittier's thought and genius by adding that "this hive of individuality [New England] has sent out swarms, and scattered its ideas like pollen throughout the northern belt of our States. As far as these have taken hold, modified by change and experience, New England stands for the nation and her singer for the national poet. . . . All in all, and more than others, he has read the heart of New England, and expressed the convictions of New England at her height of moral supremacy. . . . But he was the singer of what was not an empty

day, and of a section whose movement became that of a nation, and whose purpose in the end was grandly consummated."

"'Snow-Bound' is our one national idyl, the perfect poem of New England winter life."—*R. W. Gilder.*

"He is in the highest degree patriotic, American. He loves America because it is the land of freedom. . . . If anybody will take the trouble to glance over the complete works of Whittier, he or she will find that one of the predominant characteristics of his writings is their indigenous quality, their national spirit. Indeed, this is almost too notorious to need mention. He, if any one, merits the proud title of 'A Representative American Poet.' His whole soul is on fire with love of country. As is the case of Whitman, his country is his bride, and upon it he has showered all the affectionate wealth of his nature. . . . He has a distinctive national spirit or vision; he is democratic in his feelings, and treats of indigenous subjects."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"The home-bred singer, like so many of his predecessors, framed the simple chant of that which he best knew. . . . The young editor in various Eastern cities never lost his constant and affectionate memories of the lovely Essex county which gave him birth; and he carried into his political work the placid strength of the Merrimack in its familiar meadows near the sea. His genius is wholly instinctive and national."—*C. F. Richardson.*

"His themes have been mainly chosen from his own times and country, from his own neighborhood, even. . . . Whittier has done as much for the scenery of New England as Scott for that of Scotland. . . . One quality above all others in Whittier—his innate and unstudied Americanism—has rendered him alike acceptable to his countrymen and to his kindred beyond the sea."—*James Grant Wilson.*

"John Greenleaf Whittier is, in some respects, the most American of all the American poets. . . . It is safe to



say that he has been less influenced by other literature than any of our poets—with the exception, perhaps, of Bryant.”  
—*R. H. Stoddard.*

“To our own mind, Mr. Whittier is perhaps the most peculiarly American poet of any that our country has produced. The woods and waterfowl of Bryant belong as much to one land as to another; and all the rest of our singers: Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, and their brethren—with the single exception of Joaquin Miller—might as well have been born in the land of Shakespeare and Milton and Byron as in their own. But Whittier is entirely the poet of his own soil. All through his verse we see the elements that created it.”  
—*Harriet Prescott Spofford.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Our father’s God! From out whose hand  
The centuries fall like grains of sand,  
We meet to-day, united, free,  
And loyal to our land and Thee;  
To thank Thee for the era done  
And trust Thee for the opening one.

“Thou, who hast here in concord furled  
The war-flags of a gathered world,  
Beneath our Western skies fulfil  
The Orient’s mission of good will;  
And, freighted with love’s Golden Fleece,  
Send back its Argonauts of peace.”

—*Centennial Hymn.*

“The riches of the Commonwealth  
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health;  
And more to her than gold or grain,  
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

“For well she keeps her ancient stock,  
The stubborn strength of Pilgrim Rock.  
And still maintains, with milder laws  
And clearer light, the Good Old Cause!”—*Our State.*

- “ We give thy natal day to hope,  
O Country of our love and prayer !  
Thy way is down no fatal slope,  
But up to freer sun and air.
- “ Tried as by furnace-fires, and yet  
By God’s grace only stronger made ;  
In future task before thee set  
Thou shalt not lack the old-time aid.
- “ The fathers sleep, but men remain  
As wise, as true, as brave as they ;  
Why count the loss and not the gain ?—  
The best is that we have to-day.”— *Our Country*.

### 7. Genius for Ballad-Making—Lyrical Power.—

“ We have no American ballad-writer—that is, writer of ballads founded on our native history and tradition—who can be compared with him, either in the range or skilful treatment of his material.”—*Bayard Taylor*.

“ These fresh improvisations [ballads] are as perfect works of art as the finest Greek marbles. . . . Such ballads as ‘The Witch’s Daughter’ and ‘Telling of the Bees’ are as absolutely faultless productions as Wordsworth’s ‘We are Seven’ and his ‘Lucy Gray,’ or as Uhland’s ‘*Des Sängers Fluch*,’ or William Blake’s ‘Mary.’ . . . The period in Whittier’s life from about 1858 to 1868 we may call the Ballad Decade ; for within this time were produced most of his immortal ballads. We say immortal, believing that if all else that he has written shall perish, his finest ballads will carry his name down to remote posterity. . . . ‘The Tent on the Beach’ is mainly a series of ballads ; and ‘Snow-Bound,’ although not a ballad, is still a narrative poem closely allied to this species of poetry, the difference between a ballad and an idyl being that one is made to be sung and the other to be read ; both narrate events as they occur, and leave to the reader all sentiments of reflection.”—*W. S. Kennedy*.

"His poem itself ["Cassandra Southwick"] can scarcely be overrated. The march of the verse has something that reminds us of the rhythm of Macaulay's fine classical ballads, something which is resemblance, not imitation."—*Mary Russell Mitford*.

"Almost alone among American poets he has revived the legends of his neighborhood in verse, and his 'Floyd Ireson' is among the best of modern ballads, surpassed by none save Scott, if even by him."—*James Grant Wilson*.

"In reality, he has managed the ballad form with more skill than other measures."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"There can be no question as to Whittier's genius for ballad-making."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"Lyrics such as 'Telling the Bees,' 'Maud Muller,' and 'My Playmate' are miniature classics; of this kind are those which confirmed his reputation and still make his volumes real household books of song."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"There was ne'er a man born who had more of the swing  
Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of thing."

—*Lowell*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Then rose up John de Matha  
In the strength the Lord Christ gave,  
And begged through all the land of France  
The ransom of the slave.

. . . . .

"'God save us!' cried the captain,  
'For nought can us avail;  
Oh, woe betide the ship that lacks  
Her rudder and her sail!

"'Behind us are the Moormen;  
At sea we sink or strand;  
There's death upon the water,  
There's death upon the land!

“ Then up spake John de Matha :  
 God's errands never fail !  
 Take thou the mantle which I wear,  
 And make of it a sail.’

“ They raised the cross-wrought mantle,  
 The blue, the white, the red ;  
 And straight before the wind off-shore  
 The ship of Freedom spread.”

—*The Mantle of St. John De Matha.*

“ They bound him on the fearful rack,  
 When, through the dungeon's vaulted dark,  
 He saw the light of shining robes,  
 And knew the face of good St. Mark.

“ Then sank the iron rack apart,  
 The cords released their cruel clasp,  
 The pincers, with the teeth of fire,  
 Fell broken from the torturer's grasp.”

—*The Legend of St. Mark.*

“ A weight seemed lifted from my heart,—a pitying friend was  
 nigh,

I felt it in his hard, rough hand, and saw it in his eye ;  
 And when again the sheriff spoke, that voice, so kind to me,  
 Growled back its stormy answer like the roaring of the sea,—

“ ‘ Pile my ship with bars of silver,—pack with coins of Spanish  
 gold,

From keel-piece up to deck-plank, the roomage of her hold,  
 By the living God who made me !—I would sooner in your bay  
 Sink ship and crew and cargo, than bear this child away ! ’ ”

—*Cassandra Southwick.*

**8. Power of Characterization.**—“ The two poems upon Sumner are eminent specimens of careful study and strong portraiture. The same may be said of Dr. Howe, of Mrs. Keene, of Webster in ‘The Lost Occasion’—of Field and Taylor—and still more of the touching and matchless eulogy of Burns. The concluding stanzas of the last-mentioned poem are so full of tenderness, shadowed by inevitable

regret, so fervent in the appreciation of genius, and so throbbing with manly love, that it is hard for a man of sensibility to read them without tears. . . . The language of his genius was manifested in 'Randolph of Roanoke,' a magnificent tribute to the memory of that great man, and all the more so in that it was wrung from the lips of an opponent. As a piece of character-painting I know not where to look for its equal. . . . He is a remarkable critic of character, as he proved in his 'Ichabod,' in 'Sumner,' and in the poem entitled 'My Namesake,' a keen, searching examination of his mental qualities and of the intention and scope of his poetry."—*F. H. Underwood*.

"In his tribute to the eminent men and women of his day, . . . we observe a fine discrimination of character and the power of placing mental and moral traits in high relief. . . . As a piece of character-painting [Randolph of Roanoke] I know not where to look for its equal, and the marvel is that the portrait of this great slave-holder should have been drawn so justly by such a partisan as Whittier. . . . 'The Barefoot Boy' is an exquisite character-study, which, as far as my recollection goes, has no parallel in English poetry."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

"As a writer of personal tributes, whether pæans or monodies, the reform bard, with his peculiar faculty of characterization, has been happily gifted. . . . The conception of 'Ichabod' is most impressive. Those darkening lines were graven too deep for obliteration."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Reference should be made to the numerous personal tributes—often full of grace, of tender feeling, and of true honor paid to the humble—which he was accustomed to lay as his votive wreath on the graves of his companions. . . . The verses to Garrison and Sumner, naturally stand first in fervor and range as well as in interest."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"Their [his characters'] likeness canvas never will so well repeat."—*Harriet Prescott Spofford*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" One language held his heart and lip,  
Straight onward to his goal he trod,  
And proved the highest statesmanship  
Obedience to the voice of God.

" No wail was in his voice ; none heard,  
When treason's storm-cloud blackest grew,  
The weakness of a doubtful word ;  
His duty, and the end, he knew.

" For there was nothing base or small  
Or craven in his soul's broad plan ;  
Forgiving all things personal,  
He hated only wrong to man."

—*On Charles Sumner.*

" Not for rapt hymn nor woodland lay,  
Too grave for smiles, too sweet for tears ;  
We speak his praise who wears to-day  
The glory of his seventy years.

" When Peace brings Freedom in her train,  
Let happy lips his songs rehearse ;  
His life is now his noblest strain,  
His manhood better than his verse."

—*Bryant on his Birthday.*

" His still the keen analysis  
Of men and moods, electric wit,  
Free play of mirth, and tenderness  
To heal the slightest wound from it.

" And his the pathos touching all  
Life's sins and sorrows and regrets,  
Its hopes, its fears, its final call  
And rest beneath the violets.

" His sparkling surface scarce betrays  
The thoughtful tide beneath it rolled,  
The wisdom of the latter days,  
And tender memories of the old."—*Our Autocrat.*

**9. Dexterous Use of Proper Names.**—Whittier's fluency has been the theme of general remark. It is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the remarkable way in which he blends formidable proper names into smooth verse.

"The Indian names are made as musical as Homer's enumeration of the Greek ships."—*Harriet Prescott Spofford*.

"That he had a certain amount of natural ear is shown by his use of proper names, in which, after his early period of Indian experiments had passed, he rarely erred."—*T. W. Higginson*.

"The musical nomenclature of the red aborigines is finely handled, and such words as Pennacook, Babboosuck, Coutoocook, Bashaba, and Weetamoc chime out here and there along the pages with as silvery a sweetness as the Tuscan words in Macaulay's 'Lays.' "—*W. S. Kennedy*.

"Through thee her Merrimacs and Agrochooks  
And many a name uncouth even gracious looks."

—*Lowell*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Squirrels which fed where nuts fell thick  
In the gravelly bed of the Otternic;  
And small wild hens, in reed-snares caught,  
From the banks of Sondargadee brought;

"Pike and perch from the Suncook taken,  
Nuts from the trees of the Black Hills shaken,  
Cranberries picked from the Squamscot bog,  
And grapes from the vines of the Piscataquog."

—*The Bridal of Pennacook*.

"Lead us away in shadow and sunshine,  
Slaves of fancy, through all thy miles,  
The winding ways of Pemigewasset,  
And Winnepesaukee's hundred isles."

—*Revisited*.

“ Still let them come,—from Quito’s walls  
 And from the Orinoco’s tide,  
 From Lima’s Inca-haunted halls,  
 From Santa Fe and Yucatan,—  
 Men who by swart Guerrero’s side  
 Proclaimed the deathless rights of man,  
 Broke every bond and fetter off,  
 And hailed in every sable serf  
 A free and brother Mexican ! ”

—*The World’s Convention of Friends of Emancipation.*

**10. Biblical Imagery.**—The most superficial observer cannot fail to be impressed with Whittier’s remarkable acquaintance with Holy Writ. It colors all his pages, and supplies him with a large proportion of his imagery.

“ The injunction to beware of the man of one book applies to the poet whose Bible was interpreted for him by a Quaker mother. Its letter is rarely absent from his verse, and its spirit never. His hymns, than which he composes nothing more spontaneously, are so many acts of faith.”—*E. C. Stedman.*

“ Whittier has drawn great refreshment and inspiration from the thrice-winnowed wheat and the living wells of Old-Testament literature.”—*W. S. Kennedy.*

“ His strong imagination fed upon it [the Bible]. And as its very phraseology is blended with his familiar and his poetic speech, so, more than this, his whole nature drew upon the fountains of its waters. It is interesting to observe how, throughout his poetry, allusions to Biblical characters and passages fall as naturally from his lips as Greek or Roman allusions from Milton’s.”—*G. E. Woodberry.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Give and receive ; go forth and bless  
 The world that needs the hand and heart  
 Of Martha’s helpful carefulness  
 No less than Mary’s better part.”

—*At School-close.*



“ Another sound my spirit hears,  
 A deeper sound, that drowns them all,—  
 A voice of pleading choked with tears,  
 The call of human hopes and fears,  
 The Macedonian cry to Paul ! ”

— *The Summons.*

“ And Samson's riddle is our own to-day,  
 Of sweetness from the strong,  
 Of union, peace, and freedom plucked away  
 From the rent jaws of wrong.”

— *The Hive at Gettysburg.*

**II. Simplicity — Sincerity — Artlessness.** — “ His artless art, as it has been well called, was but developed in his later years. . . . What he said was best said in the simple, natural way in which he chose to say it.”—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

“ As Longfellow's finely modulated instrument will carry some of his light conceptions farther down the years than they would be likely to win through their own force ; so we may reasonably have confidence that the entire naturalness of Whittier's art, despite its narrow technical range—he never wrote a sonnet, for example—will continue long to please the lovers of poetry.”—*G. E. Woodberry.*

“ The wasteful irregularity and hurried excess which have diminished or destroyed the value of so much of Whittier's writings—and so much of American literature—here [in “ Snow-Bound ”] gives place to the simplicity of artless art, lightly touched and slightly transfigured by gleams of that ideal excellence toward which life and its reflecting literature aspire.”—*C. F. Richardson.*

“ One and all of them [the narrative poems] we may certainly call simple, earnest, artless, and beautifully true to the native traditions and temper of New England.”—*Barrett Wendell.*

“ He is always simple, always free from that turgidness

and mixture of metaphors which often mar the writings of Lowell."—*T. W. Higginson.*

"At every step of the analysis it is not with art but with matter, not with the literature of taste but with that of life, not with a poet's skill but with a man's soul, that we find ourselves dealing; in a word, it is with character almost solely; and it is this which has made him the poet of his people, as the highest art might have failed to do, because he has put his New England birth and breeding—the common inheritance of her freedom-loving, human, and religious people which he shared—into plain living, yet on such a level of distinction that his virtues have honored the land."—*G. E. Woodberry.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"We saw the slow tides go and come,  
The curving surf-lines lightly drawn,  
The gray rocks touched with tender bloom  
Beneath the fresh-blown rose of dawn.

"We saw in richer sunsets lost  
The sombre pomp of showery noons;  
And signalled spectral sails that crossed  
The weird, low light of rising moons.

"On stormy eves from cliff and head  
We saw the white spray tossed and spurned;  
While over all, in gold and red,  
Its face of fire the lighthouse turned."

—*A Sea Dream.*

"The pines were dark on Ramoth hill,  
Their song was soft and low;  
The blossoms in the sweet May wind  
Were falling like the snow.

"The blossoms drifted at our feet,  
The orchard birds sang clear;  
The sweetest and the saddest day  
It seemed of all the year.

- "For, more to me than birds and flowers,  
My playmate left her home,  
And took with her the laughing spring,  
The music and the bloom.
- "She kissed the lips of kith and kin,  
She laid her hand in mine :  
What more could ask the bashful boy  
Who fed her father's kine ?
- "She left us in the bloom of May ;  
The constant years told o'er  
Their seasons with as sweet May morns,  
But she came back no more.
- "I walked, with noiseless feet, the round  
Of uneventful years ;  
Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring  
And reap the autumn ears."—*My Playmate.*
- "No bird-song floated down the hill,  
The tangled bank below was still ;
- "No rustle from the birchen stem,  
No ripple from the water's hem.
- "The dusk of twilight round us grew,  
We felt the falling of the dew ;
- "For, from us, ere the day was done,  
The wooded hills shut out the sun.
- "But on the river's farther side  
We saw the hill-tops glorified,—
- "A tender glow, exceeding fair,  
A dream of day without its glare.
- "With us the damp, the chill, the gloom ;  
With them the sunset's rosy bloom ;
- "While dark, through willowy vistas seen,  
The river rolled in shade between."
- The River Path.*

## TENNYSON, 1809-1892

**Biographical Outline.**—Alfred Tennyson, born at Somersby, North Lincolnshire, August 6, 1809; father rector of Somersby; Tennyson is the fourth of twelve children, and two of his seven brothers also become poets of some distinction; his father was the son of an English gentleman, who had disinherited him in favor of a younger brother; Tennyson is taught at home till his seventh year, when he is sent to Lowth to live with his grandmother and to attend the grammar school of that town; he passes four years unpleasantly at this school, under a strict and passionate master; in 1820 he returns to Somersby, and remains there under his father's tuition till he enters college; he becomes an omnivorous reader, especially of poetry, in his father's good library, and is inspired by the charm of his rural surroundings at Somersby, which were celebrated later in his "Ode to Memory;" in his thirteenth year, in a letter to his mother, he writes a critical review of Milton's "Samson Agonistes," illustrating his points by references to Homer, Dante, and other poets; he began to write verse at the age of eight, first praising the flowers in Thomsonian blank verse and then, having fallen under the spell of Pope's "Homer," writing "hundreds and hundreds of lines in the regular Popeian metre;" before his thirteenth year he wrote an "epic" of six thousand lines, and his father predicted, "if Alfred should die, one of our greatest poets will have gone;" in 1827 Tennyson collaborates with his brother Charles in publishing, through a bookseller of Lowth, a volume entitled "Poems by Two Brothers," for which they receive £20, one-half being taken in books; Tennyson's part in this volume consists mainly of imitations of

Byron, Moore, and other favorites, and is inferior to his earlier poems, which he rejected from the published volume as being "too much out of the common for the public taste;" these rejected poems, of which specimens were afterward collected by his son, show an astonishing command of metre and music.

In February, 1828, with his brother Charles, Tennyson matriculates at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he soon becomes intimate with such stimulating companions as J. R. Spedding, Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), J. M. Kemble, Merivale, R. C. Trench, Charles Buller, and Arthur Hallam, the youngest son of the historian and the dearest friend of Tennyson; in "In Memoriam," of which Hallam is the subject, the poet calls him "as near perfect as mortal man can be;" Tennyson does excellent work as a student at Cambridge, devoting himself especially to the classics as well as to history and the natural sciences; he also takes a keen interest in the political questions of the day, and works constantly at metrical composition; in June, 1829, at the instigation of his father, he competes for and wins the chancellor's medal, with verses entitled "Timbuctoo;" this was really an old poem of Tennyson's, written in blank verse on "The Battle of Armageddon" and adapted to the new theme; Alfred Ainger calls it "as Tennysonian as anything the author ever produced;" Tennyson's competitors in this contest were Milnes and Hallam; in 1830 he publishes a volume of one hundred and fifty pages, entitled "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical," and containing, besides other poems afterward discarded, "Clari-bel," "An Ode to Memory," "Mariana in the Moated Grange," "The Dying Swan," etc.; although not at first appreciated by the public, Tennyson's work in this volume is praised by Leigh Hunt and by John Bowring, who commends it in the *Westminster Review*; in the summer of 1830, with his friend Hallam, Tennyson makes an expedition to the Pyrenees, where he receives much poetic stimulation from the

beautiful scenery and where he writes parts of "Ænone" in the valley of Carterets in February, 1831.

After two and one-half years at Cambridge he is compelled by the ill health of his father to leave the university; in 1830 he expresses disapproval of the educational methods prevailing at Cambridge, in a sonnet, complaining that "they taught him nothing, feeding not the heart;" his father dies within a month after Tennyson leaves Cambridge, and Arthur Hallam becomes a very frequent and intimate visitor of the poet and his mother at the Somersby rectory; in 1831 Hallam becomes engaged to Tennyson's sister Mary; their ideal courtship is immortalized later by the poet in "In Memoriam;" as the new rector of Somersby did not care to occupy the manse, the Tennysons remained there till 1837; during these years Tennyson frequently visits Hallam's family in Wimpole Street, London, and there ardently discusses literary and social questions, while his manuscript poems are handed about freely among his intimate friends for criticism before publication; in the summer of 1832 Tennyson and Hallam make a tour of the Rhine district, and in December of that year the poet publishes "Poems by Alfred Tennyson," a volume including "The Lady of Shalott," "The Miller's Daughter," "The Palace of Art," "The Lotos Eaters," and "A Dream of Fair Women;" three hundred volumes of the new poems are promptly sold, but they are condemned in a silly and brutal criticism in the *Quarterly Review*, with the result that Tennyson publishes no more verse for ten years.

On September 15, 1833, Arthur Hallam dies suddenly at Vienna, while travelling with his father; his body is brought to England, and is interred at Clevedon, Somerset, in a church overlooking the Bristol Channel; Tennyson and his family are overwhelmed by the loss, and he writes at this time fragments of "In Memoriam," though this poem was not completed and published till ten years afterward; about this time he writes also "Two Voices," and "Thoughts on Suicide;"

he afterward declared that the loss of Hallam blotted out all joy from his life and made him long for death ; during the next few years he remains at Somersby, " reading widely all literatures, polishing old poems, making new ones, corresponding with Spedding, Kemble, Milnes, and others, and acting as father and adviser to the family at home ; " at the marriage of his brother Charles, in 1836, Tennyson takes into the church as a bridesmaid the elder sister of his brother's bride, Miss Emily, daughter of Henry Sellwood, a solicitor at Horn-castle, and eventually they become engaged ; with his mother and the rest of the family he removes, in 1837, from Somersby to High Beech in Epping Forest, where they remain till 1840 ; they go thence to Tunbridge Wells for a year and, in 1841, settle at Boxley near Maidstone ; meantime Tennyson continues to write poetry and completes, as early as 1835, the " Morte d' Arthur," " The Day Dream," and " The Gardener's Daughter ; " in 1837 he contributes to " a volume of the ' keepsake ' order " his poem " The Tribute ; " during this year he also meets Gladstone, who becomes thenceforward his warm admirer and friend ; meantime Miss Sellwood's family attempt to break off her engagement with Tennyson by forbidding all association and correspondence between them ; in 1842 he publishes his " Poems " in two volumes, and this establishes his rank as then the greatest living poet ; besides the chief poems from the volumes of 1830 and 1833 and the others just mentioned, these volumes contained " Locksley Hall," " Godiva," " The Two Voices," " Ulysses," " A Vision of Sin," " Break, Break, Break," and other lyrics ; meantime what little capital the poet's family have is hopelessly lost by an unfortunate investment in a scheme for mechanical wood-carving, and they pass through " a season of real hardship," during which Tennyson suffers so seriously from hypochondria that his friends despair of his life ; his critical condition causes friends to appeal in his behalf to the prime minister, Sir Robert Peel, and in September, 1845, a

pension of £200 a year is granted to the poet from the civil list ; the specific appeal is said to have been made by Monckton Milnes, who won Peel by reading to him "Ulysses," although the prime minister had known nothing of Tennyson before.

By 1846 the "Poems" reach a fourth edition ; during this year Tennyson is boldly assailed by Bulwer Lytton in his "New Timon," and is called "Schoolmiss Alfred," while his claims to the pension are challenged ; Tennyson replies vigorously in lines entitled "The New Timon and the Poets," which appear in *Punch* over the pseudonym "Alcibiades," having been sent to that journal by John Forster without Tennyson's knowledge ; a week later Tennyson publicly expresses his regret and recantation of the whole matter in lines entitled "An Afterthought," still published in his collected poems under the head of "Literary Squabbles ;" in 1847 he publishes "The Princess," without the six incidental lyrics, which were added in the third edition, in 1850 ; "The Princess" reaches five editions in six years, but does not add greatly to Tennyson's popularity ; in June, 1850, he publishes anonymously "In Memoriam," on which he had worked at intervals during the previous seventeen years ; its authorship is at once recognized ; the public welcomes it with enthusiasm, but the critics are less warm in their praise ; the poem is bitterly attacked by party theologians and by some reviewers ; in April, 1850, on the death of Wordsworth, the laureateship was offered to Rogers, who declined it on the ground of age ; then, chiefly because of Prince Albert's admiration of "In Memoriam," the honor is offered to Tennyson and is accepted ; the sales of "In Memoriam" insure to Tennyson an income that warrants matrimony, and he is married to Miss Sellwood June 13, 1850, at Shiplake-on-the-Thames, where the lovers first met after a separation of ten years ; in after days Tennyson used to say, "The peace of God came into my life when I wedded her."



After his marriage Tennyson settles at Chapel House, Montpelier Row, Twickenham; in 1851 he writes his sonnet to Macready on the occasion of the actor's retirement from the stage; in July of the same year, with his wife, he visits the baths of Lucca, Florence, and the Italian Lakes, returning by way of the Splügen—a tour that he afterward celebrated in “The Daisy;” later in 1851 he writes several patriotic poems, including “Britains, Hold Your Own,” and “All Hands Round,” which are published in *The Examiner*; in August, 1852, his second child, a son, is born (the first child died at birth) and is named Hallam, Henry Hallam and Frederick Denison Maurice standing godfathers; on the death of Wellington, in November, 1852, Tennyson writes his great “Ode to Wellington,” which appears on the morning of the funeral, and excites “all but universal depreciation;” in 1853, while visiting in the Isle of Wight, the poet learns of a house called Farringford for rent at Freshwater, and, after inspecting it with his wife, he hires it with the privilege of a purchase later on; about two years later he buys it with the income from his poem “Maud,” and it becomes his home during the greater part of every year until his death; one object in settling at Freshwater was to escape the intrusions on his working hours incident to a residence near London; in March, 1854, another son (Lionel) is born, and Tennyson arranges for an edition of his poems to be illustrated by Millais, Holman Hunt, and Rossetti; during this year he visits Glastonbury and other places connected with the Arthurian legend, preparatory to writing his “Idylls of the King,” and also works on “Maud;” in December, 1855, he reads of the disastrous charge at Balaclava, and writes at one sitting his “Charge of the Light Brigade,” which is printed in *The Examiner* of December 9th; in June, 1855, the University of Oxford confers on him the degree of D.C.L., and in the following autumn he publishes “Maud” in a volume containing also “The Daisy,” “Ode on the Duke of Well-

ington," "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "Break, Break, Break," etc.; "Maud" is at first received with violent antagonism and even derision; not discouraged, Tennyson continues to work at the Arthurian poems, and completes "Enid" during the autumn of 1856; during 1858 he completes "Guinevere," and begins his dramatic lyrics in monologues entitled, respectively, "The Grandmother" (published in *Once a Week* in July, 1859, with an illustration by Millais) and "Sea Dreams" (published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1860); in the autumn of 1859 he publishes "The Idylls of the King," which are at once received with great popular favor; among other noted men who praise the poems are Jowett, Macaulay, Dickens, and Ruskin; from this time till his death Tennyson's popularity remains unabated; in 1860 he visits Cornwall, Devonshire, and the Scilly Islands, and in 1861 Auvergne and the Pyrenees, where he writes "All along the Valley," in memory of his visit thirty years before with Arthur Hallam; in 1861 he prepares a new edition of "The Idylls of the King," and adds the dedication to the prince consort, then lately deceased; during 1862 he works on "Enoch Arden," has his first introduction to the Queen, and makes a tour through Derbyshire and Yorkshire in company with F. T. Palgrave; during 1863 he completes "Aylmer's Field," and writes his "Welcome to Alexandra," on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Wales; in 1864 he publishes the volume called "Enoch Arden," of which 60,000 copies were sold at once; this volume contained, besides "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field," "Tithonus" (reprinted from the *Cornhill Magazine*), "The Grandmother," "Sea Dreams," and "The Northern Farmer: Old Style;" with the exception of "In Memoriam" this became the most popular volume of Tennyson's works, and it has been translated into Danish, German, Latin, Dutch, French, Hungarian, and Bohemian.

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Tennyson's next volume, "The Holy Grail," appeared in

1869, and contained also "The Passing of Arthur," "Pelleas and Etarre," "The Victim," "Wages," "The Higher Pantheism," and "The Northern Farmer: New Style;" during this year he is made an honorary fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; during 1868 he builds his new home, Aldworth, near Haslemere, where he afterward resides during a part of every year; in 1872 he adds "Gareth and Lynette" to the Arthurian cycle; in 1873 he declines a baronetcy offered by Gladstone, and in 1874 refuses the same honor when offered by Disraeli; in 1875 he publishes his first blank-verse drama, "Queen Mary;" although not popular in its tone, this drama was adapted to the stage by Henry Irving, and was successfully presented in April, 1876; during 1876 Tennyson publishes his other drama, "Harold;" in 1879 he reprints "The Lover's Tale," based on a story of Boccaccio, and written when he was under twenty years of age, printed in 1833, and then distributed only among a few personal friends; it was republished only because it was being extensively pirated; in December, 1879, the Kendals produce Tennyson's little blank-verse drama "The Falcon," also based on one of Boccaccio's stories, and it has a run of sixty-seven nights; this drama was first published in 1884, in the same volume with "The Cup;" in March, 1880, Tennyson accepts an invitation to stand for an election to the lord chancellorship of Glasgow University, but promptly withdraws his name on learning that it is to be a political contest and that he is expected to represent the Conservative Party; during this year, under the advice of his physician, he seeks better health by a tour, with his son, to Venice, Bavaria, and the Tyrol, and publishes the volume called "Ballads and Poems;" this volume included "The Revenge," "Rizpah," "The Children's Hospital," "The First Quarrel," "The Defence of Lucknow," and "The Northern Cobbler;" during 1871 Tennyson's drama "The Cup" is successfully presented, and he sits for his portrait to Millais;

in November, 1882, another drama, "The Promise of May," is produced with but little success; in January, 1884, after much hesitation, he accepts a peerage offered by the Queen on the recommendation of Gladstone; during this year he publishes "The Cup," "The Falcon," and his tragedy of "Becket;" in 1885 appears "Tiresias and Other Poems," including a prologue to Tennyson's friend, Edward FitzGerald (then lately deceased), besides "The Ancient Sage" and the Irish dialect poem "To-morrow;" he is deeply affected by the death of his second son, Lionel, who died in April, 1886, while on the return voyage from a visit to Lord Dufferin in India; in December, 1886, Tennyson publishes a volume containing "The Praise of May" and "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After;" during 1887 he cruises in a friend's yacht, visits Devonshire and Cornwall, prepares another volume of poems for publication, and writes "Vastness" (published in *Macmillan's Magazine*) and "Owd Roa;" during 1888 he is dangerously ill with rheumatic gout; in the spring of 1889 he makes a voyage in the yacht of his friend Lord Brassey, and in the following December publishes "Demeter and Other Poems," including "Merlin and the Gleam," an autobiographical allegory, and "Crossing the Bar," which was written one day while crossing the Solent on his annual journey from Aldworth to Farringford; he is in feeble health during 1890, but in 1891 he completes for Daly, the American manager, the drama "Robin Hood," which was produced in New York under the title "The Foresters;" during 1892 Tennyson writes his "Lines on the Death of the Duke of Clarence," cruises to Jersey, and visits London; during this, his last year, he also looks over the proofs of an intended volume of poems, "The Death of Ænone," and takes a deep interest in the forthcoming production of "Becket" by Irving; he dies at Aldworth, October 6, 1892, and is buried in the "Poets' Corner" at Westminster Abbey, many of the most famous men of England acting as his pall-bearers.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

**I. Ideal Portraiture.**—"With few exceptions, Tennyson's most poetical types of men and women are not substantial beings but beautiful shadows, which, like the phantoms of a stereopticon, dissolve if you examine them too long and closely."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"What first attracted people were Tennyson's portraits of

women. . . . Each word of them is like a tint, curiously shaded and deepened by the neighboring tint, with all the boldness and results of the happiest refinement."—*Taine*.

"In one respect I think 'In Memoriam' surpasses all his other works. I mean in the exquisite tone of the pictures it contains."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"Mr. Tennyson sketches females as never did Sir Thomas Lawrence. His portraits are delicate, his likenesses perfect, and they have life, character, and individuality."—*Professor Wilson* [Christopher North].

"His color and outline in conveying the visual image are based on a study of natural fact and a practice in transferring it to words which are equally beyond comparison. . . . Let any one of a thousand of his descriptions body itself before the eye, and the picture will be like the things seen in a dream, but firmer and clearer."—*George Saintsbury*.

"Observe how the poet gazes face to face upon what he portrays, how distinctly he hears every word falling from the lips of his characters. He never slurs, he never generalizes. . . . He sees the apple-blossom as it sails on the rill; the garden walk is bordered with lilac. He lets you hear the words of the simple, kindly rustics, and you see the flowers plucked for the wreath, to bind the brow of the little child. . . . It [the portrait of Lilian] reminded me of nothing I had ever read in poetry or in prose. No strong feeling was produced, but I experienced a distinct sensation of pleasantness, like that of seeing a delicately tinted, quaintly shaped china cup; or finding a curiously-veined, richly-flushed shell on the seashore."—*Peter Bayne*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"At length I saw a lady within call,  
Stillter than chisel'd marble, standing there;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall  
And most divinely fair,



Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
 Froze my swift speech : she, turning on my face  
 The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
 Spoke slowly in her place."

—*A Dream of Fair Women.*

"O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
 Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
 Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
 Your melancholy sweet and frail  
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
 From the westward-winding flood,  
 From the evening-lighted wood,  
 From all things outward you have won  
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
 Between the rainbow and the sun.  
 The very smile before you speak,  
 That dimples your transparent cheek,  
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
 The senses with a still delight  
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
 Like the tender amber round,  
 Which the moon around her spreadeth,  
 Moving thro' a fleecy night."—*Margaret.*

"Mystery of mysteries,  
 Faintly smiling Adeline,  
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
 But beyond expression fair  
 With thy floating flaxen hair;  
 Thy rose lips and full blue eyes  
 Take the heart from out my breast  
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?"—*Adeline.*

2. Picturesqueness.—"Many years ago, as I have  
 always remembered, on the appearance of the first four 'Idylls

of the King,' one of the greatest painters living pointed out to me, with a deep word of rapturous admiration, the wonderful breadth of beauty and the perfect force of truth in a single verse of Elaine,

'And white sails flying on the yellow sea.'

. . . And I know once more the truth of what I had never doubted—that the eye and the hand of Mr. Tennyson may always be trusted, at once and alike, to see and express the truth. Again,

'Its stormy crests that smote against the skies.'

Only Victor Hugo himself can make words lighten and thunder like these."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"In the description of pastoral nature in England no one has ever surpassed Tennyson. The union of fidelity to nature and extreme beauty is scarcely to be found in an equal degree in any other writer. . . . In Tennyson there is no tendency to inventiveness in his descriptions of scenery; he contents himself with the loveliness of the truth seen through the medium of such emotion as belongs to the subject in hand."—*R. H. Horne*.

"An idyllic or picturesque mode of conveying [his] sentiment is the one natural to this poet, if not the only one permitted by his limitations. In this he surpasses all the poets since Theocritus. . . . He is a born observer of physical nature, and, whenever he applies an adjective to some object or passingly alludes to some phenomenon, which others have but noted, is almost infallibly correct. He has the unerring first touch which in a single line proves the artist; and it justly has been remarked that there is more true English landscape in many an isolated stanza of 'In Memoriam' than in the whole of 'The Seasons,' that vaunted descriptive poem of a former century."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"The poetry of Tennyson is replete with magnificent pictures, flushed with the finest hues of language, and speaking

to the eye and the mind with the vividness of reality. We not only see the object but feel the associations connected with it. His language is penetrated with imagination, and the felicity of his epithets especially leaves nothing to desire."

—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Quiet scenes and soft characters he delights to portray, and he portrays them with what the painters call a very soft touch."—*C. C. Felton.*

"In Mr. Tennyson alone, as we think, the spirit of the middle age is perfectly reflected; its delight, not in the 'sublime and picturesque,' but in the green leaves and spring for their own sake. . . . Give him but such scenery as that which he can see in every parish in England, and he will find it a fit scene for an ideal myth. . . . It is the mystic, after all, who will describe Nature most simply, because he sees most in her; because he is most ready to believe that she will reveal to others the same message that she has revealed to him. . . . He has become the greatest naturalistic poet that England has seen for centuries."—*Charles Kingsley.*

"The power which makes Tennyson's idylls so unique in their beauty is, I think, his wonderful skill in creating a perfectly real and living scene, . . . a scene every feature of which helps to make the emotion delineated more real and vivid. . . . Is there, in the whole range of English poetry, such a picture of a summer twilight as this:

'By night we lingered on the lawn,' etc.?

I know no descriptive poetry that has the delicate spiritual genius of that passage, its sweet mystery, its subdued lustre, its living truth, its rapture of peace."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"The wonderful succession of cartoons in the 'Palace' and the 'Dream' exhibit this [combination of music and pictures] in his very earliest stage, . . . the power of filling eye and ear at once. . . . The attraction of the poem 'In

Memoriam' is . . . , above all, in those unmatched landscapes and sketches of which the poet is very prodigal."

—*George Saintsbury*.

"Every line of his poems on Nature is a picture in a new style of art, something which had not 'been done before in this fashion and finish; no, not even by Wordsworth, whose love of flowers and birds is less pictorial but more instinct with the life of the things he describes. . . . Scattered through these poems [1842] are lovely, true, and intimate descriptions of Nature in England, done with an art which never forgets itself and which seems sometimes too elaborate in skill. 'The Gardener's Daughter' is alive with such descriptions. Step by step we move on, the changing scene is painted. We walk through the landscape with Tennyson."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"In the poetic reproduction of visual impressions Tennyson's superiority to all but the very greatest of English poets, and his equality with those greatest, is so well established and was displayed in such an overwhelming abundance of examples, that to quote from but a few of his pages would be to fill my own. One could not pass by his image of banished fancy :

'sadder than a single star  
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds,'

nor a hundred other passages . . . in which the poet has set before us a picture with a few strokes of his enchanted brush, and of each and all of which the same question would have to be asked: Where does the commanding merit of the material end and the victorious power of art begin?"

—*H. D. Traill*.

"There is a voluptuous glow in this coloring, warm and rich as that of Titian, yet often subdued by the distinct outline and chastened tone of the Roman school; while the effect of the whole is elevated by the pure expressiveness of Raphael."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now burgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

“ Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And, drown'd in yonder living blue,  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

“ Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea.”—*In Memoriam*.

“ Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,  
And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd,  
We reached a meadow slanting to the North ;  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a private hedge ;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned ;  
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us as we enter'd in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.  
The garden-grasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurels scatter'd silver lights.”

—*The Gardener's Daughter*.

“ To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day ;  
The last red leaf is whirled away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

“ The forest cracked, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dashed on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world.”

—*In Memoriam*.

3. **Exquisite Finish—Smooth Melody.**—"In technical elegance, as an artist in verse, Tennyson is the greatest of modern poets. Other masters, old and new, have surpassed him in special instances ; but he is the only one who rarely nods, and who always finishes his verse to the extreme. . . . Here is the absolute sway of metre, compelling every rhyme and measure needful to the thought ; here are sinuous alliterations, unique and varying breaks and pauses, winged flights and falls, the glory of sound and color everywhere present, or, if missing, absent of the poet's free will. . . . The blank verse of the 'Morte d'Arthur' and 'Guinevere' is the perfection of English rhythm ; nor has Tennyson of late years uttered a poem without that objective foresight which sees the end from the beginning and makes the whole work round and perfect. A great artist, a strong and conscientious singer holding his imagination quite in his own hand. In Tennyson we have the strong repose of art whereof the world is slow to tire. . . . The fulness of his art evades the charm of spontaneity. . . . Tennyson's original and fastidious art is of itself a theme for an essay. The poet who studies it may well despair, he can never excel it ; . . . its strength is that of perfection ; its weakness, the over-perfection which marks a still-life painter. . . . Let me conclude my remarks on his art with a reference to his unfailing taste and sense of the fitness of things. This is neatly exemplified in the openings, and especially in the closings, of his idylls. The artistic excellence of his work has been, from the first, so distinguished that lay critics are often at a loss how to estimate this poet. Tennyson's art-instincts are always perfect ; he does the fitting thing, and rarely seeks through eccentric and curious movements to attract popular regard. . . . E. A. Poe said that 'in perfect sincerity' he pronounced him 'the noblest poet that ever lived.' If he had said the 'noblest artist,' and confined this judgment to the lyrists of the English tongue, he probably would have made no exaggeration."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"The perception of harmony lies in the very essence of the poet's nature, and Mr. Tennyson gives magnificent proofs that he is endowed with it."—*Wordsworth*.

"But of others [besides Shakespeare] only Spenser had hitherto drawn such pictures as those of the 'Palace' and the 'Dream,' and Spenser had done them in far less terse fashion than Tennyson. Only Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, Blake, perhaps Beddoes, and a few Elizabethans had poured into the veins of language the ineffable musical throb of a score of pieces, from 'Claribel' to 'Break! Break!' and not one of them had done it in quite the same way. Only Milton, with Thomson as a far distant second, had impressed upon non-dramatic blank verse such a swell and surge as that of 'Cenone.' And about all these different kinds and others there clung and rang a peculiar dreamy slow music, which was heard for the first time, and which has never been reproduced—a music which in the 'Lotos Eaters,' impossible as it might have seemed, adds a new charm after the 'Faerie Queen,' after the 'Castle of Indolence,' after the 'Revolt of Islam,' to the Spenserian stanza, which makes the stately verse of the 'Palace' and the 'Dream' tremble and cry with melodious emotion, and which accomplishes the miracle of the poet's own dying swan in a hundred other poems all flooded over with eddying song. . . . There is nothing greater about it ["In Memoriam"] than the way in which, side by side with the prevailing undertone of the stanza, the individual pieces vary the music and accompany it, so to speak, in duet with a particular melody. It must have been already obvious to good ears that no greater master of harmonies—perhaps that none so great—had ever lived; but 'In Memoriam' set the fact finally and irrevocably on record. . . . In all other respects (except faulty rhymes and occasional accumulations of tribrachs) his versification is by far the most perfect of any English poet, and results in a harmony positively incomparable. . . . Take any one of a myriad of lines of Tenny-

son, and the mere arrangement of vowels and consonants will be a delight to the ear. . . . The same music continued to sound—with infinite variety of detail, but with no breach of general character—from ‘Claribel’ itself to ‘Crossing the Bar.’ . . . If you want quick music you must go elsewhere for it or be content with the poet not at his best. But in the other mode of linked and long-drawn-out sweetness he has hardly any single master and no superior.”—*George Saintsbury*.

“Tennyson possesses a consummate science of rhythm, the rarest resources of phrase, taste, grace, distinction, every sort of clearness, of research, of refinement. He is the author of lyric pieces unequalled in any other language, some of infinite delicacy, some of engrossing pathos, some quivering like the blast of a mighty horn.”—*Edmond Schéfer*.

“He has performed some miracles of versification, and achieved verbal melodies, especially in his ballads, that vindicate most sweetly our so-called harsh Saxon idiom.”—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

“His song can steal forth, catch by a faint but ærial prelude the ear, quick to seize on the true music of Olympus, and then, with growing and ever-swelling symphonies, still more ethereal, still fuller of wonder, love, and charmed woe, can travel on amid the listening and spellbound multitude, an invisible spirit of melodious power, expanding, soaring aloft, sinking deep, coming now as from the distant sea, and filling all the summer air, so that it can triumph in its own celestial energy. The poet himself would rather not be found. . . . The poetry of Tennyson, like that of Shakespeare, seems to possess a music of its own. It is evidently evolved amid the intense play of melodies which are as much a part of the individual mind itself as the harmonies of nature are a part of nature. Like Shakespeare, Tennyson is especially fond of, or rather haunted by, musical refrains, the airs that are not invented but struck out; that cannot be



conceived by any labor of thought, but are inspired."—*William Howitt.*

"Taking the blank verse of the 'Idylls' through and through, as a work of art, it is more finished, more expressive, more perfectly musical than that of 'Paradise Lost.' . . . He has never done anything more pure and perfect than these songs from 'The Princess,' clear and simple and musical as the chime of silver bells, deep in their power of suggestion as music itself. . . . 'Sweet and Low,' 'Ask me no more,' and 'Blow, Bugle, Blow,' will be remembered and sung as long as English hearts move to the sweet melody of love and utter its secret meanings in the English tongue. . . . These lyrics [in "Maud"] are magical, unforgettable; they give an immortal beauty to the poem. . . . It ["Demeter"] is an example of that opulent, stately, and musical blank verse in which Tennyson is the greatest master since Milton died."—*Henry van Dyke.*

"Though Tennyson, of course, does not bring to its execution a voice of the mighty volume of Milton's, he has not only written what is far more perfect as a work of art than 'Paradise Lost' . . . but a poem which shadows forth the ideal faith of his own time. Lord Tennyson was an artist even before he was a poet; . . . the eye for beauty, grace, and harmony of effect was even more emphatically one of his original gifts than the voice for poetic utterance itself. . . . He is one of the greatest masters of meter, both simple and sonorous, that the English language has ever known."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"The art stands up in his poems self-proclaimed and not as any mere modification of thought and language but the operation of a separate and definite power in the human faculties. . . . Whatever he writes is a complete work—he holds the unity of it as firmly in his hand as his CEnone's Paris holds the apple—and there is nothing broken or incomplete in these two full volumes. His few 'fragments'

are entire in themselves and suggest the remainders."—*R. H. Horne.*

"It is to note, too, that the Laureate of to-day deals with language in a way that to the Tennyson of the beginning was impossible. . . . In those early years he was rather Benvenuto than Michael Angelo, he was more of a jeweller than a sculptor; the phrase was too much for him, the inspiration of the incorrect too little. Most interesting is it to the artist to remark how impatient of rhyme and how confident in rhyme is the whilom poet of 'Oriana.' . . . Now it is the art; it is the greater Shakespeare, the consummate Rembrandt. . . . He was an artist in words. . . . From the first, Lord Tennyson was an exemplar, and now, in these new utterances, his supremacy is completely revealed."—*W. E. Henley.*

"Before him no poet dared to use sound or metre in the same manner as the architect and sculptor use form, and the painter form and color. It was a new delight, both to the ear and to the unrecognized sense which stands between sensuousness and pure intelligence. Because, more than most poets, he consciously possessed this power, he rapidly learned how to use it. His 'Mariana' is an extraordinary piece of minute and equally finished detail. The fastidious care with which every image is wrought, every bar of the movement adjusted to the next and attuned to the music of all, every epithet chosen for point, freshness, and picturesque effect, every idea restrained within the limits of close and clear expression—these virtues so intimately fused became a sudden delight for all lovers of poetry, and for a time affected their appreciation of its more unpretending and artless forms."—*Bayard Taylor.*

"I know of no blank verse which reminds me of 'Ænone' in its general structure, its musical variations of rhythm, and its verbal finish; it is simply perfect."—*R. H. Stoddard.*

"He was the greatest artist in words that Cambridge has ever produced."—*Lowell.*

"There is no finer ear than Tennyson's, nor more command of the keys of language. Color, like the dawn, flows over the horizon from his pencil in waves so rich that we do not miss the central form."—*Emerson*.

"On the going out of the imaginative, sentimental, and Satanic school, Tennyson appeared exquisite. All forms and ideas which had pleased them were found in him, but purified, modulated, set in a splendid style."—*Taine*.

"His pictures of rural scenery, among the finest in the language, give the inner spirit as well as the outward form of the objects, and represent them, also, in their relation to the mind which is gazing on them."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"So perfect is his rhythmical instinct in general that he seems to see with his ear."—*E. A. Poe*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Bird's love and bird's song  
 Flying here and there,  
 Bird's song and bird's love,  
 And you with gold for hair!  
 Bird's song and bird's love,  
 Passing with the weather,  
 Men's song and men's love,  
 To love once and forever.

Men's love and bird's love,  
 And women's love and men's!  
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,  
 You my queen of the wrens!  
 You the queen of the wrens—  
 We'll be birds of a feather,  
 I'll be the king of the queen of the wrens,  
 And all in a nest together."—*The Window*.

"There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
 The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,  
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,

And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine  
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus,  
 Stands up and takes the morning : but in front  
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal,  
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
 The crown of Troas."—*Ænone*.

"She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead ;  
 Would start and tremble under her feet  
 And blossom in purple and red."—*Maud*.

**4. Occasional Passion—Vehemence.**—"The tournament scene at the close of the fifth book of 'The Princess' is the most vehement and rapid passage in the whole range of Tennyson's poetry. By an approach to the Homeric swiftness, it presents a contrast to the laborious movement of much of his narrative verse. . . . He does not, like Browning, catch the secret of a master-passion, nor, like the old dramatist, the very life of action."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"There was a fire of passion under this smooth surface. A genuine poetic temperament never fails in this. It feels too acutely to be at peace."—*Taine*.

"When Tennyson attempts to rise into passionate expression, as when Pelleas turns and strikes his curse at Ettarre and her harlot towers, he becomes only violent without power. That vivid sketch at the beginning, of the wood and of the bracken burning around it in the sunlight, cannot keep up its speed and fire to the end. Nor is there a single piece of noble or passionate writing in the whole of 'The Idylls of the King,'

save at the end, where Pelleas breaks into the hall of Arthur swordless."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"Never since the beginning of all poetry were the twin passions of terror and pity more divinely done into deathless words or set to more perfect and profound magnificence of music."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"'Fatima' is full of true and vehement and yet musical passion, and suggests the strong flow of Lesbian poetry and particularly the well-known fragment of Sappho addressed to a woman."—*John Sterling*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"O my cousin, shallow hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

"Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

"What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed  
with wine.

Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in thine.

"It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought ;  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter  
thought.

"He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my  
hand."—*Locksley Hall*.

"Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the  
night,  
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the  
fright ?  
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for  
the day.  
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may go your  
way.

"Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all—

I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the churchyard wall.  
My Willy 'll rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'll sound,

But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

"And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire :  
Do you think that I care for my soul if my boy be gone to the fire ?

I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may leave me alone—

You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as stone."

—*Rizpah*.

"Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse ;

Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own ;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearth-stone ?

"And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

"When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war ! loud war by land and sea,  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones."

—*Maud*.

**5. Ornateness—Ornamentation of the Common-place.**—Walter Bagehot, one of the acutest of modern critics, takes Tennyson's "Enoch Arden" as a specimen of ornate art as distinguished from pure art [Shelley's] and grotesque art [Browning's]. Many of Tennyson's other poems illustrate the same quality.

"The essence of ornate art is . . . to accumulate

around the typical object everything which can be said about it, every thought that can be associated with it, without impairing the essence of the delineation. . . . Nothing is described as it is; everything has about it an air of something else. . . . That is to say, that the function of the poet is to introduce a 'gay confusion,' a rich medley, which does not exist in the actual world. . . . As Enoch was and must be coarse, in itself the poem must depend for a charm on a 'gay confusion,' on a splendid accumulation of impossible accessories. . . . Tennyson has painted with pure art . . . the 'Northern Farmer,' and we all know what a splendid, what a living thing he has made of it. He could, if he only would, have given us the ideal sailor in like manner; the ideal of a natural sailor, we mean—the characteristic present man as he is and lives. . . . Mr. Tennyson has made it his aim to call off the stress of fancy from real life, to occupy it otherwise, to bury it with pretty accessories. . . . The story of Enoch Arden as he has enhanced and presented it, is a rich and splendid composite of imagery and illustration. Yet how simple that story is in itself. A sailor who sells fish breaks his leg, gets dismal, gives up selling fish, goes to sea, is wrecked on a desert island, stays there some years, on his return finds his wife married to a miller, speaks to a landlady on the subject, and dies. Told in the pure and simple, unadorned and classical style, this story would not have taken three pages. . . . He has given us a sailor covered all over with ornament and illustration, because he then wanted to describe an unreal type of fancied man—not sailors as they are but sailors as they might be wished. . . . But nothing in this class of subjects is more remarkable than the power he possesses of communicating to simple incidents and objects of reality preternatural spirit as part of the enchantment of the scene. We are fortunate in not having to hunt out of past literature an illustration of ornate style. . . . Mr. Tennyson has just given one ad-

mirable in itself and most characteristic of the defects and merits of this style. . . . That art is the appropriate art for an unpleasing type. Many of the characters of real life, if they were brought distinctly, prominently, and plainly before the mind, as they really are, if shown in their inner nature, their actual essence, are doubtless very unpleasant. They would be horrid to meet and horrid to think of."—*Walter Bagehot*.

"It may not be the highest imaginable sign of the poetic power or native inspiration that a man should be able to grind a beauty out of a deformity or carve a defect into a perfection; but whatever may be the comparative worth of this peculiar faculty, no poet ever had it in a higher degree or cultivated it with more patient and strenuous industry than Mr. Tennyson."—*A. C. Swinburne*.

"For the most part he wrote of the every day loves and duties of men and women; of the primal pains and joys of humanity; of the aspirations and trials which are common to all ages and all classes and independent even of the diseases of civilization, but he made them new and surprising by the art which he added to them, by beauty of thought, tenderness of feeling, and exquisiteness of shaping."—*Stopford Brooke*.

"He gave them [his poems] too much adornment and polishing; he seemed like an epicurean in style as well as in beauty."—*Taine*.

"Warmed by his imagination, clad in his felicitous language, or penetrated by his refined sentiment, the hackneyed theme or common object are reproduced with a new and endearing beauty."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"It ["Gareth and Lynette"] is drawn like a series of vignettes in interlacing arabesque patterns, . . . reminding us not only of the detached cleverness with which it abounds but also of the effort to make them clearer. . . . Without his intention or will, or even expectation, he has stimulated into existence a school of what might be called decorative poetry."—*Bayard Taylor*.



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“ While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
 Or often journeying landward ; for in truth  
 Enoch's white horse and Enoch's ocean spoil,  
 In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
 Rough-reddened with a thousand winter gales,  
 Not only to the market cross were known,  
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp  
 And peacock yew-tree of the lonely Hall,  
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.”

—*Enoch Arden.*

“ He spoke, and one among his gentlewomen  
 Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
 Where, like a shoaling sea, the lovely blue  
 Play'd into green, and thicker down the front  
 With jewels ran the sward with drops of dew,  
 When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,  
 And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
 Strike where it clung : so thickly shone the gems.”

—*Geraint and Enid.*

“ One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
 A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars :  
 This had a rosy sea of gilly flowers  
 About it ; this, a milky-way on earth,  
 Like visions of the Northern dreamer's heavens,  
 A lily-avenue climbing to the doors ;  
 One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves,  
 A summer burial deep in the hollyhocks.”

—*Aylmer's Field.*

**6. Moral Elevation—Optimism.**—“ Without being a pedant he is moral ; . . . he does not rebel against society and life ; he speaks of God and the soul nobly, tenderly, without ecclesiastical prejudice. . . . We may listen when we quit

him, without being shocked by the contrast, to the grave voice of the master of the house, who reads evening prayers before the kneeling servants. . . . He has not rudely trenched upon the truth and passion. He has risen to the height of noble and tender sentiments. He has gleaned from all nature and history what was most lofty and amiable."—*Taine*.

"Tennyson always speaks from the side of virtue ; and not of that new and strange virtue which some of our later poets have exalted, and which, when it is stripped of its fine garments, turned out to be nothing else than the unrestrained indulgence of every natural impulse ; but rather of that old-fashioned virtue whose laws are 'self-reverence, self-control, self-knowledge,' and which finds its highest embodiment in the morality of the New Testament. . . . There is a spiritual courage in his work, a force of faith which conquers doubt and darkness, a light of inward hope which burns dauntless under the shadow of death. Tennyson is the poet of faith ; faith as distinguished from cold dogmatism and the acceptance of traditional creeds ; faith which does not ignore doubt and mystery, but triumphs over them and faces the unknown with fearless heart. The poem entitled ' Vastness ' is an expression of this faith. . . . Nothing that Tennyson has ever written is more beautiful in body and soul than ' Crossing the Bar.' . . . The effect of Christianity upon the poetry of Tennyson may be felt, first of all, in its general moral quality. By this it is not meant that he is always preaching. But at the same time the poet can hardly help revealing, more by tone and accent than by definite words, his moral sympathies. . . . He is in no sense a rose-water optimist. But he is in the truest sense a meliorist. . . . He rests his faith on the uplifting power of Christianity. . . . The chief peril which threatens the permanence of Christian faith and morals is none other than the malaria of modern letters—an atmosphere of dull, heavy, faithless materialism. Into this narcotic air the poetry of Tennyson blows like a pure wind

from a loftier and serener height. . . . Tennyson is essentially and characteristically a poet with a message. His poetry does not merely exist for the sake of its own perfection of form. It is something more than the sound of one who has a lovely voice and can play skilfully upon an instrument. It is a poetry with a meaning and a purpose. It is a voice that has something to say to us about life. . . . When we read them [Tennyson's Poems] we feel our hearts uplifted, we feel that, after all, it is worth while to struggle toward the light, it is worth while to try to be upright and generous and true and loyal and pure, for virtue is victory, and goodness is the only fadeless and immortal crown. . . . He teaches the gospel of personal love and help, which is Christianity. . . . The secret of the poet's influence must lie in his spontaneous witness to the reality and supremacy of the moral life. His music must thrill us with the conviction that the humblest child of man has a duty, an ideal, a destiny. He must sing of justice and of love as a sure reward, a steadfast law, the safe port and haven of the soul. . . . There is hardly one of Tennyson's poems in which this testimony is not clearly and distinctly uttered. The ideal which shines through all of his poetry is simply the example of 'Him who wrought with human hands, the creeds of creeds,' etc. We have turned to the pages of 'In Memoriam' for that human consolation which is only less than divine. I suppose that there is only one Book which, for these last forty years, has done more to comfort sorrow."—*Henry van Dyke*.

"Like Robert Browning, Lord Tennyson, though he had his moods of sorrow and perplexity, was an optimist, who had achieved his right to optimism by the fighting down of despair and doubt."—*F. W. Farrar*.

"Tennyson, like every true poet, has the strongest feeling of the spiritual and almost mystic character of the associations attaching to the distant sail which takes the ship on its lonely journey to an invisible port, and has more than once used it

to lift the mind into the attitude of hope or trust."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"Mr. Tennyson's sense of a beneficent unfolding in our life of a divine purpose, lifts him through and over the common dejections of men."—*Edward Dowden.*

"Alfred Tennyson has given many a fatal blow to many an old narrow maxim in his poems; he has breathed into his later ones the generous and the victorious breath of noble philanthropy, the offspring of the great renovator—the Christian religion. . . . His moral views, whether directly or indirectly conveyed, are healthy, manly, and simple; and the truth and delicacy of his sentiments is attested by the depth of pathos which he can wake from the commonest incidents, told in the simplest manner, yet deriving all their interest from the manner of telling."—*W. M. Howitt.*

"I should say he was pre-eminently the prophet of faith. His message exhorted all to have faith in man and in God. He held that when men believed in man they found ground to believe in God."—*W. T. Stead.*

"The chastity and moral elevation of this volume ["Idylls of the King"], its essential and profound though not didactic Christianity, are such as cannot be matched throughout the circle of English literature in conjunction with an equal power."—*W. E. Gladstone.*

"He wrote only of that of which he loved to write, that which moved him to joy or reverence, that which he thought of good report for its loveliness. Even the things he did as Poet Laureate, when, if ever, he might have been untrue to this, have no tinge of the world about them. . . . When the moral conduct of life, when the great sanctions of morality are to be represented, Tennyson impassions them and lifts them into poetry. This is one of his greatest powers."—*Stopford Brooke.*

"Hundreds of Tennyson's lines and phrases have become fixed in the popular memory; and there is scarcely one of

them that is not suggestive or consoling or heartening. He delights to sing of honor and chastity and fidelity, and his most voluptuous measures celebrate no greater indulgence than indolence and the sensuous delight of life. His conscious teaching has always been wholesome and elevating."

—*Bayard Taylor.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I held it truth with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things."

—*In Memoriam.*

"O lift your natures up :  
Embrace our aims ; work out your freedom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed :  
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave ;  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble."—*The Princess.*

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

"That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ;

"That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

"Behold we know not anything ;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring."—*In Memoriam.*

**7. Biblical Flavor and Diction.**—It has been said that if every Bible in existence were to be entirely destroyed, the cardinal doctrines of Christianity could be determined by the biblical references in Shakespeare's plays. The same is true in a great degree of Tennyson. Van Dyke collects from his poems no less than three hundred explicit references to the Bible, to say nothing of the Christian spirit that pervades every page.

“When we come to speak of the biblical scenes and characters to which Tennyson refers, we find so many that we have difficulty to choose. . . . It would be impossible even to enumerate all of Tennyson's allusions to the life of Christ, from the visit of the Magi, which appears in the ‘Morte d'Arthur,’ and ‘The Holy Grail’ down to the lines in ‘Balin and Balan’ which tell of ‘that same spear wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ.’ . . . One cause of his popularity is because there is so much of the Bible in Tennyson. How much, few even of his ardent admirers begin to understand. . . . ‘And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest,’ is perhaps the best illustration of Tennyson's felicitous use of words of the Scripture. But there are others, hardly less perfect, in the wonderful sermon which the rector in ‘Aylmer's Field’ delivers after the death of Edith and Leolin. It is a mosaic of Bible language, most curiously wrought, and fused into one living soul by the heart of an intense sorrow. ‘The Idylls of the King’ are full of delicate and suggestive allusions to the Bible.”—*Henry van Dyke*.

“Not all the musical charm of Tennyson's poetry, nor its peerless art, nor its luxuriousness of imagination, nor its marvellous pathos has so fully invested it with the quality that endures as has his loyalty to the revelation of God found in the Holy Scripture and his association of his own song with that word which ‘liveth and abideth for ever.’ ”—*W. E. Gladstone*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Cast all your cares on God ; that anchor holds.  
Is He not yonder in the uttermost  
Parts of the morning ? If I flee to these  
Can I go from Him ? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His, he made it.”—*Enoch Arden*.

“Strong Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

“Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, Thy foot  
Is on the skull which Thou hast made.

“Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And Thou hast made him ; Thou art just.

“And all is well, tho’ faith and form  
Be sundered in the night of fear ;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm.”—*In Memoriam*.

“And tho’ thou numberest with the followers  
Of one who cried, ‘Leave all and follow me,’  
Thee therefore with His light about thy feet,  
Thee with His message ringing in thine ears,  
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from Heaven,  
Born of a village girl, carpenter’s son,  
Wonderful, Prince of Peace, The Mighty God,  
Count the more base idolater of the two.”

—*Aylmer’s Field*.

8. **Yearning—Infinite Regret.**—This is the key-note of Tennyson’s masterpiece, and is characteristic of very many of his other poems. While he is not a pessimist, and while he has not the maddening thirst for the unknown that charac-

terizes Shelley, his muse is often pensive, and delights in dwelling upon that which is "loved and lost."

"But then the song ["Break, Break, Break"] returns again to the helpless breaking of the sea at the foot of the crags it cannot climb, not this time to express the inadequacy of human speech to express human yearnings but the defeat of those very yearnings themselves. . . . He can conceive with the subtlest power the passionate longing for death of a mortal endowed with immortality, doomed like Tithonus to outlive all life and joy and tremble at the awful prospect of a solitary eternity of decay. . . . The 'Passing of Arthur' contains lines resonant with the highest chords of spiritual yearning and bewildered trust, lines which echo and re-echo in one's imagination like the dying tones of the organ in a great cathedral's aisles."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"The wisdom, yearnings, aspirations of a noble mind are here [in "In Memoriam"]; the poet's imagination, shut in upon itself, strives to irradiate with inward light the mystic problems of life."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"The note of restrained and tender melancholy has always been one of the chief features of Tennyson's poetry. It is not obtrusive, but it is pervasive; it is rarely bitter or cynical, but it is always there. It is apparent in the choice of subject even in those early poems ["Juvenilia"]. Death and change strike the key-note of the volume."—*W. J. Dawson*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand.

"A hand that can be clasped no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep;  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.



" He is not here ; but far away  
 The noise of life begins again,  
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
 On the bald street breaks the blank day."

—*In Memoriam.*

" And the stately ships go on  
 To their haven under the hill ;  
 But oh for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
 And the sound of a voice that is still !

" Break, Break, Break,  
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
 Will never come back to me."

—*To E. L., on his Travels in Greece.*

" Oh that 'twere possible  
 After long grief and pain  
 To find the arms of my true love  
 Round me once again !  
 . . . . .

" —A shadow flits before me,  
 Not thou, but like to thee :  
 Ah Christ, that it were possible  
 For one short hour to see  
 The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
 What and where they be."—*Maud.*

**9. Dramatic Power.**—" I would not be surprised to hear that any true critic would rate ' Queen Mary,' whether in dramatic force or in general power, below ' Henry VIII.,' but my own impression is that it is a decidedly finer work of dramatic art. . . . The great poet of the nineteenth century will certainly never be regarded as a great dramatist. But that, being the great lyric poet he is, he should be so great even as he is in drama, will always be his singular distinction."—*R. H. Hutton.*

" His greatest achievement still is that noblest of modern episodes, the canto entitled ' Guinevere,' surcharged with

tragic pathos and high dramatic power. He never has so reached the *passio vera* of the early dramatists as in this imposing scene."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"It cannot, indeed, be doubted that if Tennyson had devoted himself to the dramatic form from the first he might have been original and masterly in that as he has been in lyricism. All along he has given striking proofs of a power to seize and portray character in phases and wholes."—*J. M. Robertson*.

"His dramatic experiments, like 'Queen Mary,' are not, on the whole, successful, though it would be unjust to deny dramatic power to the poet who has written, upon the one hand 'Guinevere' and the 'Passing of Arthur,' and on the other the homely dialectic monologue of the 'Northern Farmer.' . . . The interview between Arthur and his fallen queen is marked by a moral sublimity and a tragic intensity which move the soul as nobly as any scene in modern literature."—*Henry A. Beers*.

"Tennyson lacks the dramatic quality, but he possesses a faculty which is sometimes mistaken for it—the representative faculty. It is present in the 'Northern Farmer,' 'The Northern Cobbler,' etc., which may be clever character studies, but which certainly are not dramatic poems."—*R. H. Stoddard*.

"With a force of dramatic sympathy which it would be quite reasonable to compare with Shakespeare's, Tennyson enters into the person of the girl who is about to die, Iphigenia, and enables the imaginative reader to see through her eyes, to gasp and sigh with her in her swooning anguish. All is intensely real."—*Peter Bayne*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :  
 ' Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !  
 Authority forgets a dying king,

Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
 That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art ;  
 For thou, the latest left of all my knights,  
 In whom should meet the offices of all,  
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;  
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :  
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'"

—*The Passing of Arthur.*

" But how to take last leave of all I loved ?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to play  
 Not knowing ! O imperial moulded form,  
 And beauty such as never woman wore,  
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—  
 I cannot touch thy lips : they are not mine,  
 But Lancelot's : nay, they never were the King's.  
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,  
 As in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and mine own flesh,  
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,  
 ' I loathe thee.'"—*Guinevere.*

" Anything fallen again ? nay—what was there left to fall ?  
 I have taken them home, I have numbered the bones, I have  
 hidden them all.  
 What am I saying ? and what are *you* ? do you come as a spy ?  
 Falls ? what falls ? who knows ? As the tree falls so must it lie.  
 " Who let her in ? how long has she been ? you—what have you  
 heard ?  
 Why did you sit so quiet ? you never have spoken a word.  
 Oh,—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies—  
 But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my  
 eyes."—*Rizpah.*

10. Microscopic Observation—Peculiar Attitude  
 toward Nature.—" Not less remarkable is the identity of

spirit in Tennyson and Milton in their delicate yet wholesome sympathy with Nature, their perception of the relation of her woods and aspects to the human heart. . . . They [“*Idylls*”] are full of little pictures which show that Tennyson has studied nature at first hand and that he understands how to catch and reproduce the most fleeting and delicate expressions of her face. . . . Most wonderful of all is his knowledge of the sea and his power to describe it. He has looked at it from every standpoint and caught every phase of its changing aspect. . . . He has caught more [than Wordsworth] of the throbbing and passionate and joyous voices of the world ; he has not entered so deeply into the silence and solemnity of guardian mountains and sleeping lakes and broad bare skies ; but he has felt more keenly the thrills and flushes of Nature—the strange, sudden, perplexed, triumphant impulses of that eager seeking and tremulous welcoming of love which flows like life-blood through all animate things. . . . While the Lady of Shalott dwells in her pure seclusion, the sun shines, the lily blossoms on the river’s breast, and the blue sky is unclouded ; but when she passes the fatal line, and the curse has fallen on her, then

‘ In the stormy east wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods are waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining.  
Over tower’d Camelot.’

Mr. Ruskin says that this is ‘*pathetic fallacy* ;’ for, as a matter of fact, the clouds do not weep, nor do the rivers complain, and he maintains that to speak of them as if they did these things is to speak with a certain degree of falsehood which is unworthy of the highest kind of art. But Mr. Ruskin may say what he pleases about Milton and Tennyson without much likelihood of persuading any sane person that their poetry is not profoundly true to Nature—and most true precisely in its

recognition of her power to echo and reflect the feelings of man."—*Henry van Dyke*.

"In describing scenery, his microscopic eye and marvelously delicate ear are exercised to the utmost in detecting the minutest relations and most evanescent melodies of the objects before him, in order that his representation shall include everything which is important to their full perception. His pictures of English rural scenery give the inner spirit as well as the outward form of the objects, and represent them, also, in their relation to the mind which is gazing on them. The picture in his mind is spread out before his detecting and dissecting intellect, to be transformed to words only when it can be done with the most refined exactness, both as regards color and form and melody."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"He has a striking microscopic faculty, on which his poetic imagination works. No poet has so many and such accurate references to the vegetable world, and yet at the same time references so thoroughly poetic. . . . He never tired of reflecting in his poetry the physiology of flowers and trees and buds. . . . His insight into them does not come through his sympathy with active life, as Shakespeare's did: it comes of the careful scrutinizing eye of the naturalist feeding the brooding heart of a poet. It is the scenery of the mill, the garden, the chase, the down, the rich pastures, the harvest fields, the palace pleasure grounds, the Lord of Burleigh's fair domains. . . . There is always complexity in the beauty which fascinates Lord Tennyson most. . . . Note especially the realism (which Tennyson never fails to show) in explanation of especial fragrance in the air. . . . Lord Tennyson has wonderful power of putting nature under contribution to help him in delineating moods of feeling. . . . No poet has ever had a greater mastery than Tennyson over the power of real things."—*R. H. Hutton*.

"One especially rich source, both for imagery and idea, is to be found in the 'language of flowers' made use of by the

poet. Throughout his landscape poems the rich botany of the poet's language gives a vividness to the poetry much needed in the realms of abstract thought. . . . Notice, too, the accurate observation involved in 'crimson fringes' of daisy, 'earlier and later primrose.' "—*John Sterling*.

"In 'Mariana' the poet showed an art then peculiar, but since grown familiar, of heightening the central feeling by landscape accessories. The level waste, the stagnant sluices, the neglected garden, the wind in the single poplar, re-enforce, by their monotonous sympathy, the loneliness, the hopeless waiting and weariness of life in the one human figure of the poem."—*Henry A. Beers*.

"A series of physical descriptions constantly makes us sensible of the actual world, while inwrought with this the feeling of the piece, whether love or sorrow or remorse, is kept vividly before us in all its abstract significance."—*H. T. Tuckerman*.

"Mr. Tennyson, while fully adopting Wordsworth's principle from the beginning, seemed by instinctive taste to have escaped the snares which proved so subtle for Keats and for Wordsworth. . . . Above all, . . . there was a hushed and reverent awe, a sense of the mystery, the infinitude, the awfulness, as well as of the mere beauty of wayside things, which invested these poems as a whole with a peculiar richness, depth, and majesty of tone, beside which both Keats's and Wordsworth's methods of handling pastoral subjects looked like the coloring of Giulio Romano beside Titian. . . . It is just because Mr. Tennyson is, far more than Wordsworth, mystical, and what an ignorant and money-getting generation, idolatrous of mere sensuous activity, calls 'dreamy,' that he has become the greatest naturalistic poet which England has seen for several centuries."—*Charles Kingsley*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" With blackest moss the flower-pots  
   Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
   That held the pear to the gable-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange ;  
   Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
   Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
   She only said, ' My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,' she said ;  
   She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! ' "—*Mariana*.

  " Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
   Little breezes dusk and shiver  
   Thro' the wave that runs forever  
   By the island in the river  
   Flowing down to Camelot.  
   Four gray walls and four gray towers  
   Overlook a space of flowers,  
   And the silent isle embowers  
   The Lady of Shalott."

— *The Lady of Shalott*.

  " The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
 Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.  
 She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales :  
 She shook from fear, and for her fault she wept  
 Of petulancy ; she called him lord and liege,  
 Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
 Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love  
 Of her whole life ; and ever overhead  
 Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch  
 Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
 Above them ; and in the change of glare and gloom  
 Her eyes and neck glittering went and came ;  
 Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,  
 Moaning and calling out of other lands,

Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more  
 To peace ; and what should not have been had been ;  
 For Merlin, overtalked and overworn,  
 Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept."

—*Merlin and Vivian.*

**II. Repose—Peacefulness.**—"In Tennyson we have the strong repose of art, whereof—as the perfection of nature—the world is slow to tire. . . . His stream is sweet, assured, strong ; but how seldom the abrupt bend, the plunge of the cataract, the thunder of the spray ! . . . The strain of 'In Memoriam' is ever calm, even in rehearsing a by-gone violence of emotion along its passage from woe to desolation and anon, by tranquil stages, to reverence, thought, aspiration, endurance, hope. On sea and shore the elements are calm ; even the wild winds and snows of winter are brought in hand and made subservient, as the bells ring out the dying year, to the new birth of Nature and the sure purpose of eternal God."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"I know no descriptive poetry that has the delicate spiritual genius of that passage [from "In Memoriam"], its sweet mystery, its subdued lustre, its living truth, its rapture of peace."—*R. H. Hutton.*

"Some passages of the 'Lotos Eaters' give a sensation of luxurious repose far more conspicuously than the 'Castle of Indolence.'"—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

"There is nothing stirring, nothing restless, nothing ambitious in its [Tennyson's art] tone ; it has no freaks and eccentricities by which it seeks to strike the public notice. . . . But the very nature of Tennyson's genius is to be contented with what is. It is happy in itself as the bird upon the bough. It is rolled into itself, living and rejoicing in its own being and blessedness."—*W. M. Howitt.*

"Disorder of thought, of feeling, and of will is, with Mr. Tennyson, the evil of evils, the pain of pains. . . . Let us start by saying that Mr. Tennyson has a strong dignity



and efficiency of law—of law understood in its widest meaning. Energy nobly controlled, an ordered activity, delight his imagination. Violence, extravagance, immoderate force, the swerving from appointed ends, revolt—these are with Mr. Tennyson the supreme manifestations of evil. . . . Although we find the idea of God entering largely into his poems, there is little recognition of special contact of the soul with the Divine Being in any supernatural way of quiet or ecstasy. There is, on the contrary, a disposition to rest in the orderly manifestation of God as the supreme Law-Giver, and even to identify him with his presentation of himself in the physical and moral order of the universe. Mr. Tennyson finds law present throughout all nature, but there is no part of nature in which he dwells with so much satisfaction upon its presence as in human society. . . . His imagination is forever haunted by ‘the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be.’ But the hopes and aspirations of Mr. Tennyson are not those of the radical or movement character. He is in all his poems conservative as well as liberal. . . . Mr. Tennyson’s political doctrine is in entire agreement with his ideal of human character. As the exemplar of all nations is the one in which highest wisdom is united with complete self-government, so the ideal man is he whose life is led to sovereign power by self-knowledge resulting in self-control and self-control growing perfect in self-reverence. . . . In both [the poem to the Prince Consort and that to the Duke of Wellington] the characters are drawn with fine discrimination, but in both the crowning virtue of the dead is declared to have been the virtue of obedience, that of self-subjugation to the law of duty. . . . Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, the recognition of a divine order and of one’s place in that order, faithful adhesion to the law of one’s highest life—these are the elements from which is formed the human character.”—*Edward Dowden.*

"Some of the blank verse poems—a style almost unattempted in the earlier series—have a quiet completeness and depth, a sweetness arising from the happy balance of thought, feeling, and expression—that ranks them among the riches of our recent literature. . . . There is in this work ["Ulysses"] a delightful epic tone and a clear unimpassioned wisdom, quietly carving its sage words and graceful figures on pale but lasting marble. . . . The unrhymed verse has a quiet fulness of sound and all the delineation of a clear yet rich completeness of truth that render the little work ["The Gardener's Daughter"], though far from the loftiest, yet one of the most delightful we know."—*John Sterling*.

"In the poetry of Tennyson, to use an image furnished by itself, all those thunder-clouds of doubt, fear, and ambition, which had long been roofing the European world, were still visible, only they floated in an evening atmosphere and had grown golden all about the sky. . . . That enveloping calm, which Tennyson knows so well how to combine with power of expression."—*Peter Bayne*.

"In this passage [the description of a pathway in "The Gardener's Daughter"] we have a not inapt illustration of the strongest tendency of Tennyson's mind. It is from such a neat and quiet bower of peace that he looks out upon the world."—*W. J. Dawson*.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a greater grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf,  
The chestnut pattering to the ground.

"Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold.

" Calm and still light on yon great plain  
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
 To mingle with the bounding main :

" Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
 These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
 And in my heart, if calm at all,  
 If any calm, a calm despair."—*In Memoriam.*

" Live—yet live—  
 Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all  
 Life needs for life is possible to will—  
 Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by  
 My blessing : Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts  
 Too sadly for thy peace, remand it thou  
 For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,  
 If not to be forgotten, not at once—  
 Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,  
 Oh might it come like one that looks content."  
 —*Love and Duty.*

" One walk'd between his wife and child,  
 With measured footfall firm and mild,  
 And now and then he gravely smiled.

" The prudent partner of his blood  
 Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
 Wearing the rose of womanhood.

" And in their double love secure,  
 The little maiden walked demure,  
 Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

" These three made unity so sweet,  
 My frozen heart began to beat,  
 Remembering its ancient heat.

" I blest them, and they wander'd on :  
 I spoke, but answer came there none :  
 The dull and bitter voice was gone.

" A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, ' Be of better cheer.'

" As from some blissful neighborhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
' I see the end, and know the good.' "

— *The Two Voices.*

**12. Tenderness—Pathos.**—" The tenderness of Tennyson is one of his remarkable qualities—not so much in itself, for other poets have been more tender—but in combination with his rough powers. We are not surprised that his rugged strength is capable of the mighty and tragic tenderness of 'Rizpah,' but we could not think at first that he could feel and realize the exquisite tenderness of 'Elaine.' . . . It is a wonderful thing to have so wide a tenderness, and only a great poet can possess it and use it well."—*Stopford Brooke.*

"Take the stanzas entitled 'A Farewell,' the pathos of which, if it be difficult to account for, it is not the less impossible to resist. A simple touch this—a mere ejaculation of tender emotion, which seems as if it might have escaped from anybody, yet it shows how truly the poet's feeling vibrates in sympathy with nature; otherwise how should so simple a tone out of the heart awaken such an echo in our own?"—*J. R. Spedding.*

"Tennyson is a great master of pathos; knows the very tones that go to the heart; can arrest every one of those looks of upbraiding or appeal by which human woe brings the tear into the human eye. . . . The pathos is deep; but it is the majesty, not the prostration of grief."—*Peter Bayne.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,  
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me, taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.

I loved you, and my love had no return,  
 And therefore my true love has been my death.  
 And therefore to my Lady Guinevere,  
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
 Pray for my soul, thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
 For thou art a knight peerless."

—*Lancelot and Elaine.*

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?  
 O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
 That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
 Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
 A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
 Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
 My children too! must I not speak to these?  
 They know me not. I should betray myself.  
 Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl,  
 So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

—*Enoch Arden.*

" ' But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
 Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
 His father's memory; and take Dora back,  
 And let all this be as it was before.'  
 So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
 By Mary. There was silence in the room;  
 And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—  
 ' I have been to blame—to blame.  
 I have killed my son.  
 I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.  
 May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.  
 Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about  
 The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.  
 And all the man was broken with remorse;  
 And all his love came back a hundredfold;  
 And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child."

—*Dora.*

## HOLMES, 1809-1894

**Biographical Outline.**—Oliver Wendell Holmes, born August 29, 1809, in Cambridge, Mass.; father a graduate of Yale College, a writer of some local reputation, a rigid Calvinist, and during most of his life pastor of the First Congregational Church of Cambridge; his mother, whom the poet more resembled, was descended from an old Dutch family of Albany, N. Y., by the name of Wendell; Holmes begins his education at a dame's school; at fifteen he is in school at Cambridgeport, and goes thence, in 1824, to Phillips Academy, at Andover; the boy early manifests a reaction against the narrow tenets of Calvinism, and is greatly influenced by the atmosphere of Unitarianism that pervaded Cambridge during his youth; Holmes was not precocious as a verse-maker; the reading that most influenced his poetic taste in early days was Gray's "Elegy" and Pope's "Homer;" in the summer of 1825 he enters Harvard College, thus becoming a member of the famous class of 1829; while in college Holmes writes to his Andover chum and life-long friend, Phineas Barnes, "I smoke most devoutly and sing most unmusically; have written poetry for the Annual, and have seen my literary bantlings smothered in green silk and reposing in the drawing-room;" after graduating from Harvard, in 1829, he enters the Harvard Law School at Cambridge, and devotes himself to law for one year, but finds it, as he says, "very cold and cheerless about the threshold;" in 1830 he writes to Barnes, "I have been writing poetry like a madman;" the reference is to his contributions to the *Collegian*, a paper then published by the undergraduates of Harvard; these contributions include "The Spectre Pig,"

"The Mysterious Visitor," and many other verses which Holmes refused afterward to republish ; during his year in the law school he also writes his since widely known poem "Old Ironsides ;" the old frigate Constitution, then lying in the Navy Yard in Charlestown, had been condemned by the Navy Department to be destroyed ; on reading of the proposed action, Holmes seized a scrap of paper, wrote rapidly with a pencil his poetical protest, and sent it to the *Daily Advertiser* ; the poem was reprinted all through the United States, and was scattered about Washington as a handbill, with the result that the old war-ship was not destroyed ; in the autumn of 1830 he gives up the law and enters a private medical school in Boston ; in 1831 he writes : "I have been a medical student for more than six months ; I know I might have made an indifferent lawyer—I think I may make a tolerable physician—I did not like the one and I do like the other ;" soon after their graduation the Class of '29 began to have annual dinners in Boston, and Holmes accordingly began his long series of occasional poems in honor of these events ; after two courses of medical lectures in Boston he sails for Paris late in March, 1833, to spend two years there in completing his medical education ; among his travelling companions during the long voyage were George William Curtis and "Tom" Appleton.

Holmes's sojourn in Paris was made possible through funds inherited by his mother and through the rigid economy of both his parents ; after visiting Salisbury, Stonehenge, and Havre, he reaches Paris, and settles there at 55 Rue M. le Prince ; while in Paris he works industriously from 7.30 A.M. till 5 P.M., and then dines at a café with a jolly group of fellow-students—all Bostonians ; of this Parisian experience he wrote later, "I saw but little outside hospital and lecture-rooms ;" in the early summer of 1834, after the medical lectures were over, Holmes, with several companions, makes a tour through the Low Countries and back to Paris through

England and Scotland, visiting the Burns and Scott districts and the Lake country; after studying severely during the winter of 1834-35, meantime subject to immediate recall because of the war between France and America and the strained financial condition of his parents, he ships to Boston "two skeletons and some skulls," and starts, in July, 1834, on a long hoped-for tour through Switzerland and Italy, tramping from Geneva to Milan, visiting Venice, Bologna, and Rome; he returns to America in the following autumn, reaching New York December 14, 1835, after a voyage of forty-three days; he had gained much medical knowledge and an excellent command of the French tongue; while in Paris he wrote no poems; his expenses there were about \$1,200 a year, including books, instruments, and private instruction; he declared in after-life, "I never risked a franc on any game in Europe," and his biographer and cousin maintains that the young physician "brought back no skeleton except those in his trunks;" in October, 1834, when asked to contribute to the *New England Magazine*, he writes: "I shall say No, though Nemesis and Plutus come hand in hand to tear me, the Cincinnatus of science, from the plough-tail she has summoned me to follow."

Holmes establishes himself in an office in Boston early in 1836, after receiving the degree of M.D. from Harvard, and intimates to the public that "small favors (or fevers) will be thankfully received," but his practice at first was very small, and never became more than fair; his reputation as a wit and a poet was doubtless a hindrance to his professional success; late in 1836 he publishes his first volume of poems, including "Old Ironsides," "The Last Leaf," and the Phi Beta Kappa poem that he had read at Harvard during the previous summer; he occupies his leisure by acting for three seasons as one of the physicians of the Massachusetts General Hospital; in 1838 he is "mightily pleased" on receiving an appointment as Professor of Anatomy at Dartmouth College—a posi-



tion that required his residence at Hanover only during the months of August, September, and October; he holds this professorship for the years 1839 and 1840; meantime he competes successfully for the Boylston medical prize, his dissertation in the competition receiving almost unanimously the highest marks by the judges, although his competitors were physicians of large experience from various States of the Union; he also won two other medical prizes about this time; these prize dissertations were the result of enormous labor and most extensive investigation by Dr. Holmes, and the one on "Intermittent Fever in New England" is still authoritative for the period which it covers; later these and other dissertations were gathered into a volume published under the title "Medical Essays"—a book that contains some of Holmes's brightest wit, especially in his satirical essays on homœopathy; his essay on "Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever," published in 1843, established his reputation as that of a physician who had made an original and very valuable contribution to medical science; at first his theory was bitterly opposed by the most eminent professors of obstetrics, and Holmes was subjected to violent personal abuse, but his logic triumphed, and his theory is now generally accepted by medical scholars; the essay was republished in 1855.

On June 15, 1840, he was married to Amelia Lee Jackson, daughter of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts and a niece of Holmes's friend and former preceptor; of the three children of this marriage one became a Lieutenant Colonel in the Civil War and afterward a Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; the other two died in comparatively early life, several years before their father; in 1847 Holmes is made Parkman Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Medical School of Harvard College—a position that he held till 1871, when a separate Professorship of Physiology was established, he still retaining the work in Anatomy; during these twenty-four years he taught also microscopy and

psychology, so that he said he occupied "not a professor's chair but a whole settee."

Holmes was most successful in his professorship at Harvard, and took great pride in his work, though the salary was not large; his lecture was always placed latest in the afternoon, because he alone could hold the interest of the wearied students; he was one of the first American physicians to use the microscope, and invented the hand stereoscope, now so common, although he never patented it; he also made a rare collection of old medical books, which he loved as Lamb loved his old dramatists; he was Dean of the Medical School from 1847 to 1853, and continued his professorship of Anatomy till 1882; soon after his marriage he began to follow the then very common practice of lecturing in various towns and villages of New England, and became very popular in this field; his uniform terms were "fifteen dollars and expenses;" it was work that he disliked, but it was welcome as a means of eking out his then scanty income; among others, he gave twelve lectures in 1852 before the Lowell Institute on the English poets, and closed each lecture with verses of his own; during his country lecture-tours he became subject to asthma, a malady that seriously interfered with his work and his plans for travel during the rest of his life; he dared not trust himself away from home for fear of being quite overcome by asthma; his first residence after marriage was at 8 Montgomery Place, afterward Bosworth Street; thence he removed in 1858 to Charles Street, near the Cambridge bridge, where he remained till 1870, when he removed to the home in Beacon Street where he finished his days; from 1849 to 1856 he passed his summers at Pittsfield on a farm of two hundred and eighty acres on the Lenox road, an estate inherited from his maternal greatgrandfather and known in history as "Canoe Meadows."

When the *Atlantic Monthly* was established, in 1857, Lowell accepted the editorship only on the condition that

Holmes should be "the first contributor engaged;" Holmes was then fifty years of age, and had little more than a local reputation as a writer; but, as he said afterward, "Lowell woke me from a kind of literary lethargy in which I was half slumbering, to call me to active service;" Holmes named the new periodical, and his cheery contributions over the pseudonym of the "Autocrat" really saved the undertaking from financial ruin during the terrible financial panic of 1857; he had first used the pseudonym in the *New England Magazine*, twenty-five years before; on entering again the literary field, Holmes specifically declined to become either a critic or a reviewer, declaring that "when Nature manufactured her authors she made the critics out of the chips that were left;" he longs to travel, and envies the European experiences of his friends Lowell and Motley, but his asthma keeps him, as he says, "a kind of prisoner for life in Boston;" Fields, his publisher, was for many years Holmes's next-door neighbor; his best and latest poems were first published in connection with the "Autocrat" series, being scattered through the prose articles; "The Chambered Nautilus" appeared in the fourth of the "Breakfast-Table" series, and was at once pronounced by Whittier to be "booked for immortality;" during his later years Holmes often read his poems in public with great success, generally in behalf of philanthropic enterprises; soon after the establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he took a prominent part in forming the famous Saturday Club, which for many years dined at "Parker's" on the last Saturday of each month, and included, besides Holmes, Emerson, Motley, Hawthorne, Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, Whipple, Prescott, Felton, Howells, Norton, Agassiz, Parkman, Sumner, and several other prominent contributors to the *Atlantic*; next to his own family, Holmes loved the club—an attitude due in part, doubtless, to his forced provincialism; in December, 1858, he visited Irving at "Sunnyside."

After contributing "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table"

to the *Atlantic*, in twelve monthly instalments, during 1858, he followed it the next year with the series of equal length entitled "The Professor at the Breakfast-Table;" fourteen years then passed before he completed the series with "The Poet at the Breakfast-Table," in 1873; meantime he had written "Elsie Venner," first published in 1859 under the title of "The Parson's Love Story;" although this was severely criticised as "a medicated novel," etc., etc., Holmes declared that it was really conceived "in the fear of God and in the love of man;" the story really treats not so much of a question of physiology as of the profoundest problem in theology; of his two other stories, "The Guardian Angel" appeared in 1867, and "A Mortal Antipathy" in 1885.

During the war period Holmes held himself aloof from all anti-slavery and other political organizations, and distrusted the abolition movement; he had an utter distaste for meetings and committee work; although he wrote several vigorous war poems, his only public activity during this period was in the form of an oration delivered in Boston July 4, 1863; this oration was very widely applauded, and was afterward published in the volume entitled "Pages from an Old Volume of Life;" early in 1864 Holmes was one of the illustrious company that followed Hawthorne's body to the grave; during his later years he was continually appealed to for literary advice, and was often, as he said, "struggling in a quagmire of unanswered letters and unthanked-for books;" on December 3, 1879, he was honored with a breakfast by the publishers of the *Atlantic* as that contributor who, more than any other, had caused the prosperity of the magazine; at this function all the prominent living writers of America were either present in person or sent laudatory letters; on November 28, 1882, he resigned his professorship in the Harvard Medical School, after having lectured there thirty-five years, and was made Professor Emeritus; at the same time he entered into a contract with his publishers for regular literary

work ; on April 12, 1883, the medical profession of the city of New York gave a dinner in honor of Holmes, at which William M. Evarts, George William Curtis, and Whitelaw Reid took a prominent part ; after the death of Motley, one of Holmes's dearest personal friends, in May, 1877, he wrote a brief memoir for the Massachusetts Historical Society, which he afterward expanded into a small volume—a tribute rather than a biography—published in 1878 ; Holmes also wrote a " Life " of Emerson for the " American Men of Letters " series, published in 1884, but this, although the result of profound study of and about Emerson, was also a tribute or a memoir rather than a biography.

On April 29, 1886, Holmes started for Europe in company with his daughter, Mrs. Sargent ; they landed at Liverpool May 9th, after a voyage in which the Doctor suffered severely from his old enemy, the asthma ; they were received with marked social attention at Liverpool, and went thence to London, stopping at Chester ; from the beginning it was a triumphal tour, as special railway carriages, flowers, and all sorts of attentions were awaiting them everywhere ; they established themselves at 17 Dover Street, in London, and were so flooded with social invitations that they were required to keep a secretary to acknowledge them ; as Holmes writes, " Breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, teas, receptions with spread tables, two, three, four deep of an evening, with receiving company at our own rooms, took up the day ; " they met Browning, Layard, Gladstone, James Bryce, Tyndall, and scores of other eminent Englishmen, and received especial attention from Lady Harcourt, Lady Rosebery, and Sir Henry Irving, and Holmes saw the Derby of 1886 ; on the 3d of June they held a great reception and met three hundred guests ; on the 7th Holmes heard Gladstone deliver his famous speech on the Irish question ; Lowell gave him a dinner, at which were Leslie Stephen, DuMaurier, Andrew Lang, Alma Tadema, and many other artists and literary

men; then they spent two days on the Isle of Wight, by special invitation, as the guests of Tennyson; Holmes made his first visit to Cambridge in company with Edmund Gosse on June 13th; on the 16th he went again, and on the 17th received from the University the degree of Doctor of Letters; after receiving marked social attentions at Cambridge the Holmes's went to Oxford, where the program was repeated; thence by way of York to Edinburgh, and there Holmes received LL.D.; from Edinburgh to Stirling and through the Highlands to Glasgow and thence back to Oxford, where they were the guests of Vice-Chancellor Jowett, and where Browning, Lowell, and John Bright were assembled to meet Holmes; from Oxford he received the degree of D.C.L.; after leaving Oxford the party spent a week at Stratford, and then went for rest to Great Malvern; thence to Bath, thence to Salisbury for a week's sojourn, and thence back to London, stopping a week at Brighton; after staying in London from July 29th to August 5th and availing themselves of the absence of "society" to see many odd nooks about the old city, they crossed to Paris and spent a week there incognito, calling on no one but the American Minister and M. Pasteur; then another week in London, a reception in Liverpool, and back to Boston August 29, 1886.

In March, 1888, Holmes began, in the *Atlantic*, his last prose series, entitled "Over the Tea-Cups," saying: "Although I have cleared the eight-barred gate, my friends encourage me with the assurance that I am not yet in my second childhood;" in this series of articles the most remarkable feature was the poem entitled "The Broomstick Train"—a marvellous production for a man eighty years of age; his son Edward, a young man of feeble health but fine promise, had died in 1884, and while Holmes was writing the "Tea-Cup" series he lost both his wife and daughter; during the last years of the poet his oldest son, Mr. Justice Holmes, returned to the homestead on Beacon Street, and

cared for his father most tenderly ; about 1886 a cataract began to form over one of Holmes's eyes, dimming but not destroying his sight ; he called it " a *cat*-aract in the kitten stage of development ; " this affliction compelled him to do most of his writing through an amanuensis ; during the last half of his life his summers were spent in a simple cottage that he owned at Beverly Farms on the north shore of Massachusetts Bay, where countless attentions were showered upon him by near and distant friends and admirers ; he was able to walk about till his very last day, and died in his chair at his Boston home October 7, 1894.

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## PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS.

### I. Buoyancy—Youthfulness—Optimism.

"The gift is thine the weary world to make  
 More cheerful for thy sake,

. . . . .

Lighting the sullen face of discontent

With smiles for blessings sent."—*Whittier*.

"It is Holmes's special peculiarity that the childish buoyancy remains almost to the end, unbroken and irrepressible."  
 —*Leslie Stephen*.

"The thing we first note is his elastic, buoyant nature, displayed from youth to age with cheery frankness. . . . Before his day the sons of the Puritans were hardly ripe for the doctrine that there is a time to laugh, that humor is quite as helpful a constituent of life as gravity or gloom."—*E. C. Stedman*.



"I hold him as having an inalienable right to all the freshness and sincerity and vivacity of youth, with gravity struggling hard to keep dominion over his countenance and laughter escaping for shelter to his eyes."—*George Bancroft*.

"I knew Dr. Holmes more than sixty years ago. He was a very small boy then—he is still [1879] hardly less of a boy, thank Heaven!"—*W. H. Furness*.

"The first thing which strikes a reader of Holmes is the vigor and elasticity of his nature. . . . One thing appears certain, that he never can grow old. . . . It is impossible to read his later poems without being impressed by that spirit of youthfulness with which they are animated."—*E. P. Whipple*.

"We find in Dr. Holmes a cheerful and a hopeful spirit. . . . His mission has been to cherish hope in men and to plant courage in their hearts. . . . He will always be a boy, even if his fourscore years should grow into a century. The spirit of the boy is in him, and will not out at any bidding whatsoever."—*G. W. Cooke*.

"[The Poem on Contentment] is a most fair confession of his liking for life's fair and pleasant things. . . . He was neither stoic nor ascetic; neither indifferent to life's sweet and pleasant things nor, while hankering for their possession, did he repress his noble rage and freeze the genial currents of his soul. His was an undisguised enjoyment of earthly comforts; a happy confidence in the excellence and glory of our present life; a persuasion, as one has said, 'that if God made us, then he also meant us;' and he held to these things so earnestly, so pleasantly, so cheerfully, that he could not help communicating them to everything he wrote. . . . He wrote in such a jocund way, with such animal spirits and pure absurdity."—*John Chadwick*.

"He secured from the gods, who gave him immortality, also eternal youth."—*H. H. Boyesen*.

"With the kindness and humanity of the Doctor's tem-

perament there were linked the kindred virtues of unconquerable cheerfulness and buoyancy, with the courage which is the natural comrade of these traits. His philosophy was not defiant but serene."—*J. T. Morse.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?  
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.  
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!  
Old time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

"We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?  
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!  
'Gray temples at twenty?'—Yes! *white* if you please;  
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze."  
—*The Boys.*

"We see that Time robs us, we know that he cheats,  
But we still find a charm in his pleasant deceits,  
While he leaves the remembrance of all that was best,  
Love, friendship, and hope, and the promise of rest."  
—*Our Banker.*

"I have come to grow young—on my word I declare  
I have thought I detected a change in my hair!  
One hour with 'the boys' will restore it to brown,—  
And a wrinkle or two I expect to rub down."  
—*What I Have Come For.*

2. **Colloquial Habit — Familiarity — Self-Revelation.**—"The colloquial habit of the Autocrat is so marked generally as to be called distinctive. It is the quality of all the authors who are distinctly beloved as persons by their readers, and it is to this class that Holmes especially belongs. . . . Without the private personal touch of the essayist in his stories they would not be his. His colloquial habit is very winning when governed by a natural delicacy and an exquisite literary instinct. No other author takes the reader into his personal confidence more closely than Holmes, and

none reveals his personal temperament more clearly. . . . The kindly mentor takes the reader by the button and lays his hand upon his shoulder, not with the rude familiarity of the bully or the boor, but with the courtesy of Montaigne, the friendliness of John Aubrey, or the wise cheer of Selden. The reader glows with the pleasure of an individual greeting, and a wide diocese of those whom the Autocrat never saw plume themselves proudly upon his personal acquaintance." —*George William Curtis.*

"His dialogues and stories are in every way the expression of a stimulating personage, their author—a frank display of the Autocrat himself. . . . His writings surely owe their main success to an approximate exhibition of the author himself." —*E. C. Stedman.*

"There is something akin to affection which connects such poets with their readers, when poet and readers are at their best. They cannot be Shelleys, but they win by warmth, though they dazzle not by splendor. Poets of this class put their individual selves into iambus and trochee. Their personal attractiveness is transmuted into poetic force. . . . Manliness finds in Holmes a friend and culture a companion." —*C. F. Richardson.*

"He was—and is—one of the few writers who are present at the reading of their own works—a conversationalist in type, on paper—a dear friend living between the covers of a printed book. . . . He, more than most men, liked the sympathy of those for whom he wrote, and was willing to secure it by advances toward them, in which . . . he revealed his personality." —*Edward Everett Hale.*

"There is a flavor of personality which can never be mistaken. On every page you see 'Holmes, his mark.' . . . The absence of formality is one of the principal charms. . . . His unique personality was as dear as his writings. . . . His works have put him in intimate personal relation with all readers of refined feeling." —*F. H. Underwood.*

"What he wrote that he was, and every one felt this who met him. . . . [It is] the Autocrat in his best moods—those moments when, all barriers of invention and situation broken down, the author talks face to face, or rather soul to soul, consciousness to consciousness, with the reader."—*W. D. Howells.*

"The one most charming feature of his printed and spoken conversation is that he established a relation of sympathy between himself and his readers, or listeners, by expressing for them those common every-day thoughts that we all think but rarely say. . . . The sunshine of his soul gleams out upon you so often that you forget the offensive egotism of the cit in the charm of the artless humor and tender sympathy of his nature."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"Dr. Holmes had put not only the best but absolutely *all*, both of himself and about himself into the volumes with which he had amused and instructed the English-speaking world."—*J. T. Morse.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I care not much for gold or land ;—  
Give me a mortgage here and there,—  
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,  
Or trifling railroad share,—  
I only ask that Fortune send  
A *little* more than I shall spend."—*Contentment.*

"O Damsel Dorothy ! Dorothy Q. !  
Strange is the gift that I owe to you ;  
. . . .  
What if, a hundred years ago,  
Those close-shut lips had answered No,  
When forth the tremulous question came  
That cost the maiden her Norman name,  
And under the folds that look so still  
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill ?  
Should I be I, or would it be  
One-tenth another to nine-tenths me ?"—*Dorothy Q.*

"For myself, I'm relied on by friends in extremities,  
And I don't mind so much if a comfort to them it is;  
'T is a pleasure to please, and the straw that can tickle us  
Is a source of enjoyment though slightly ridiculous."

—*At the Atlantic Dinner.*

### 3. Unconventionality — Simple Treatment of Weighty Themes.—

"The researches of most scientific men, especially in abstruse subjects, like the relations of body and mind, are preserved in works which the public cannot understand if they should try. What Tyndall has done in the interpretation of the laws of nature is done even more brilliantly by Holmes; and this is not due to any letting down of the subject; it is rather furnishing the means for the ordinary mind to ascend to the higher level of thought.

. . . The truth was, prosaic folks had no way to estimate Holmes. They wrote only stately sentences, while he was free, when he chose, to use the simplest language of every-day life. The ideas they would formally promulgate in methodical order he lashed upon the reader with a dazzling wit."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"'Soundings from the Atlantic' are certainly unique in their combination of airy, humorous treatment with solid scientific discussion or teaching."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"[He is] a kind of attenuated Franklin who views things with less robustness but keener distinction and insight. . . . Somewhat distrustful of 'the inner light,' he stands squarely upon observation, experience, and induction."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"People could not believe that a man so perfectly intelligible could be profoundly wise. . . . Mystic Holmes might be, but mysterious he never was."—*W. D. Howells.*

"He is peculiarly exasperating to theological opponents . . . for the very easy way in which he gayly overlooks considerations which their whole culture has induced them to deem of vital moment."—*E. P. Whipple.*

“ There is no straining for effect ; simple, natural thoughts are expressed in simple and perfectly transparent language.”  
—*Whittier.*

“ [Dr. Holmes has been fond of exploring] that weird border-land between science and speculation where psychology and physiology exercise mixed jurisdiction.”—*Lowell*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

**"Be firm! one constant element in luck  
Is genuine, solid, old Teutonic pluck;  
See yon tall shaft; it felt the earthquake's thrill,  
Clung to its base, and greets the sunrise still.  
. . . . .  
Don't catch the fidgets; you have found your place  
Just in the focus of a nervous race,  
Fretful to change, and rabid to discuss,  
Full of excitements, always in a fuss;—  
Think of the patriarchs; then compare as men  
These lean-cheeked maniacs of the tongue and pen!  
Run, if you like, but try to keep your breath;  
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death."**

—*Urania.*

“ We, like the leaf, the summit, and the wave,  
 Reflect the light our common nature gave ;  
 But every sunbeam, falling from her throne,  
 Wears on our hearts some coloring of our own ;  
 Chilled in the slave, and burning in the free,  
 Like the sealed cavern by the sparkling sea ;  
 Lost, like the lightning, in the sullen clod,  
 Or shedding radiance, like the smiles of God ;  
 Pure, pale in Virtue, as the star above,  
 Or quivering roseate in the leaves of Love.”—*Poetry.*

“ Lady, life’s sweetest lesson wouldst thou learn,  
Come thou with me to Love’s enchanted bower :  
High overhead the trellised roses burn ;  
Beneath thy feet behold the feathery fern,—  
A leaf without a flower.

"What though the rose-leaves fall? They still are sweet,  
 And have been lovely in their beauteous prime,  
 While the bare frond seems ever to repeat,  
 'For us no bud, no blossom wakes to greet  
 The joyous flowering time!'

"Heed thou the lesson. Life has leaves to tread  
 And flowers to cherish; summer round thee glows;  
 Wait not till autumn's fading robes are shed,  
 But while its petals still are burning red  
 Gather life's full-blown rose."—*The Rose and the Fern.*

4. **Piquant Satire—Graceful Badinage.** — "His metrical satires are of the amiable sort that debars him from kinmanship with the Juvenals of old or the Popes and Churchills of more recent time. . . . Yet he is a keen observer of the follies and chances which satire makes its food. As his humor had relaxed the grimness of a Puritan constituency, so his prose satire did much to liberalize their clerical system."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"All his trenchant bits of criticism and pretended dogmatism have attached to them, like a corollary, a little hint that the cure for it all is charity—the understanding of other men better. . . . Do you remember 'Urania, a Rhymed Lesson,' away back in his youthful days—with what good humor it picked out all the little solecisms of dress, manners, and talk, and yet left the perpetrators, while entirely cured, feeling as though they were laughed with and not at?"—*R. W. Gilder.*

"Holmes is distinctively and purely a satirist, and for a lifetime has been lashing others with the most stinging and excoriating satire (tempered with humor and good-nature). . . . When at his best, his humor has the genial and kindly character which marks that of all great humorists; but too often it is only an ironical smirk, a sardonical grin, a laughing at others instead of with them."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric  
Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric,  
In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes  
That are trodden upon are your own or your foe's."

—*Lowell.*

"His manner of satirizing the foibles . . . of conventional life is altogether peculiar and original. . . . He looks at folly and pretension from the highest pinnacle of scorn. They never provoke his indignation, for to him they are too mean to justify anger, and are hardly worth petulance."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"The two *bête noirs* of Holmes are homœopathy and endless punishment, and he never lets an opportunity pass of giving a thrust at either. . . . The pleasantry is never mocking or malevolent, and the exuberance of spirit is contagious."—*F. H. Underwood.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!  
Her hair is almost gray;  
Why will she train that winter curl  
In such a springlike way?  
How can she lay her glasses down,  
And say she reads as well,  
When, through a double convex lens,  
She just makes out to spell?"—*My Aunt.*

"Don't mind if the index of sense is at zero,  
Use words that run smoothly, whatever they mean;  
Leander and Lilian and Lillibullero  
Are much the same thing in the rhyming machine.  
. . . . .

"As for subjects of verse, they are only too plenty  
For ringing the changes on metrical chimes;  
A maiden, a moonbeam, a lover of twenty  
Have filled that great basket with bushels of rhymes."

—*A Familiar Letter.*



"I think there is a knot of you  
 Beneath the hollow tree,—  
 A knot of spinster Katydids,—  
 Do Katydids drink tea?  
 . . . . .  
 Oh, tell me, where does Katy live,  
 And what did Katy do?  
 And was she very fair and young,  
 And yet so wicked, too?  
 Did Katy love a naughty man,  
 Or kiss more cheeks than one?  
 I'll warrant Katy did no more  
 Than many a Kate has done."—*To an Insect.*

5. **Exuberant, Dazzling Wit.**—"The movement of his wit is so swift that it is known only when it strikes. He will sometimes, as it were, blind the eyes of his victims with diamond-dust, then pelt them pitilessly with scoffing compliments. He passes from the sharp and stinging gibe to the most grotesque exaggerations of drollery with a most bewildering rapidity."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;  
 A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit  
 The electrical tingles of hit after hit."—*Lowell.*

"His wit is all his own, so sly and tingling, but without a drop of ill-nature in it, and never leaving a sting behind."  
 —*Francis Bowen.*

"A restless wit that sees the different sides, the contradictions, and cannot forbear to flash upon the eye all the various angles of truth, while never ceasing to take the view of the poet."—*G. P. Lathrop.*

"If any of our readers need amusement and the wholesome alternative of a hearty laugh, we commend them, not to Dr. Holmes the physician, but to Dr. Holmes the scholar, the wit, and the humorist. He was born for the 'laughter-cure' as certainly as Priessnitz was for the 'water-cure,' and has been quite as successful in his way."—*Whittier.*

"Holmes's rapier of wit and his social genius were so flashing and brilliant that few realized his vigor as a philosopher and thinker."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"As a writer of comic poetry he is excelled by no other English author. Hood's verses are not so gayly radiant as Holmes's,—do not strike the diaphragm so deeply. . . . The comic in him is always saved from Rodomontade and monstrosity by an equipoise of shrewd practical sense; we tremble as his glowing wheel grazes the brim of bombast and folly; but, with a cut of the lash and a short turn away, he flies again, laughing, and we laughing with him."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"Probably few of our wits have done so many set tasks in the 'funny line,' and done them so well as he; and few, with any celebrity as wits, have so rarely set themselves to tasks of their own in that line."—*J. T. Morse.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The times were hard when Rip to manhood grew;  
They always will be when there's work to do;  
He tried at farming—found it rather slow—  
And then at teaching—what he didn't know.

. . . . .

"Talk of your science! after all is said  
There's nothing like a bare and shiny head;  
Age lends the graces that are sure to please;  
Folks want their doctors mouldy, like their cheese."

—*Rip Van Winkle, M.D.*

"And there's our well-dressed gentleman, who sits,  
By right divine, no doubt, among the wits;  
Who airs his tailor's patterns when he walks,—  
The man that often speaks, but never talks."

—*The Banker's Dinner.*

"What dreams we've had of deathless name, as scholars, statesmen, bards,  
 When Fame, the lady with the trump, held up her picture-cards!  
 Till, having nearly played our game, she gayly whispered,  
 'Ah!'  
 I said you should be something grand,—you'll soon be grand-papa."—*To the Harvard Alumni.*

**6. Fanciful Humor.**—"To write good comic verse is a different thing from writing good comic poetry. A jest or a sharp saying may easily be made to rhyme; but to blend ludicrous ideas with fancy and imagination and to display in their conception and expression the same poetic qualities usually exercised in serious composition, is a rare distinction. Among American poets we know of no one who excels Holmes in this difficult branch of art. . . . Many of his pleasant lyrics seem not so much the offspring of wit as of fancy and sentiment turned in a humorous direction."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"For clear and unstudied humor, a sense of which creeps slowly and delightfully throughout the whole frame, the poems of the young contributor [to the *Collegian*] were superior to those of Hood, the great humorist of that day. . . . Holmes is greatest as a humorist. When at its best his humor has the genial and kindly character which marks that of all the great humorists."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"It does not appear that anyone else did so much as Dr. Holmes to change the social temper of New England, to make it less harsh and joyless, and to make easier for his fellow-countrymen the transition from old things to new."—*J. W. Chadwick.*

"[Holmes's humor is] fun shading down to seriousness and seriousness shading up to fun."—*Lowell.*

"You with the classic few belong  
 Who tempered wisdom with a smile."—*Lowell.*

"His humor is so grotesque and queer that it reminds one of the frolics of Puck."—*Francis Bowen.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"How the mountains talked together,  
Looking down upon the weather,  
When they heard our friend had planned his  
Little trip among the Andes!  
How they'll bear their snowy scalps  
To the climber of the Alps  
When the cry goes through their passes,  
'Here comes the great Agassiz!'"

—*A Farewell to Agassiz.*

"I know it is a sin  
For me to sit and grin  
At him here;  
But the old three-cornered hat,  
And the breeches, and all that,  
Are so queer!

"And if I should live to be  
The last leaf upon the tree  
In the spring,  
Let them smile, as I do now,  
At the old forsaken bough  
Where I cling."—*The Last Leaf.*

"Since then on many a car you'll see  
A broom-stick plain as plain can be;  
On every stick there's a witch astride,  
The string you see to her leg is tied.  
She will do mischief if she can,  
But the string is held by a careful man;  
And whenever the evil-minded witch  
Would cut some caper, he gives a twitch."

—*The Broomstick Train.*

7. **Pathos.**—"The poet of 'The Last Leaf' was among the first to teach his countrymen that pathos is an equal part of true humor; that sorrow is lightened by jest and jest redeemed from coarseness by emotion, under most conditions of this our evanescent human life."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"The fun in Holmes is always jostling the pathos. . . . Its ['The Last Leaf's'] pathos is all the more surprising in connection with the queer humor in the description of the old man who is the subject of the poem. . . . After some comic picture, grotesque phrase, or quick thrust, the reader comes suddenly upon a stanza of perfect beauty of form, with the gentlest touch of natural feeling."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"Broadly speaking, Holmes is Janus-faced; that is, he has a dual nature: he laughs on one side of his face, and is serious on the other; in one mood fun, humor, laughing satire predominate; he is . . . a Yorick, a Mercutio, and as nimble-witted as they; but suddenly some hidden spring of feeling or pathos is touched, the eyes brim with tears, and the soul soars upward in a rapt passion of tenderest sentiment. . . . His finest humor borders close upon pathos."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"And his the pathos touching all  
Life's aims and sorrows and regrets,  
Its hopes and fears, its final call  
And rest beneath the violets."—*Whittier.*

"'Homesick in Heaven' seems to me one of the most profoundly pathetic poems in the language."—*W. D. Howells.*

"Such lyrics as 'La Grisette' and 'The Last Leaf' show that he possesses the power of touching the deeper chords of the heart and of calling forth tears as well as smiles."—*Whittier.*

"It is the pathos in the last of these lines [in 'The Last Leaf'] that makes the richness of the humor, a pathos that is deep and sympathetic. If he laughs at what is amusing in the

deeds or in the characters of men, he can weep with them, too ; and by his weeping he shows that he is fully alive to their distress and their sorrows. It is only a moment's touch from laughter to tears ; and he has truly recognized the fact that pathos lies deeper in the nature than humor, and that humor must have its basis in the pathetic when it is most serviceable and most human."—*G. W. Cooke.*

" Still in thy human tenderness they feel  
The honest voice and beating heart of Steele."

—*Edmund Gosse.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

" If any, born of kindlier blood,  
Should ask, What maiden lies below ?  
Say only this : ' A tender bud,  
That tried to blossom in the sun,  
Lies withered where the violets blow.'"

—*Under the Violets.*

" A few can touch the magic string,  
And noisy Fame is proud to win them :—  
Alas for those that never sing,  
But die with all their music in them !  
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" Oh, hearts that break and give no sign  
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,  
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine  
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses ! "

—*The Voiceless.*

" Youth longs, and manhood strives, but age remembers,  
Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past,  
Spreads its thin hands above the whitening embers  
That warm its creeping life-blood till the last.  
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" Dear to its heart is every loving token  
That comes unbidden ere its pulse grows cold,  
Ere the last lingering ties of life are broken,  
Its labors ended and its story told."—*The Iron Gate.*

✓ **8. Point—Epigram—Whimsical Paradox.**—"The most obvious characteristic of Holmes's poetry is its combined terseness and finish. The lines are often poetical proverbs or epigrams with vigor and point in every phrase."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"His shrewd sayings are bright with native metaphor; he is a proverb-maker, some of whose words are not without wings. . . . His pertinent maxims are so frequent that it seems as if he had jotted them down from time to time and here first brought them to application; they are apothegms of common life and action, often of mental experience, strung together by a device so original as to make the work quite a novelty in literature."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"When the Autocrat himself begins talking, the sparks of epigram fly in a bracing wind of free thought, as scintillating particles of snow are whirled from the roofs in winter by every chance breeze."—*Helen Gray Cone.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The style's the man, so books avow;  
The style's the woman, anyhow."

—*How the Old Horse Won the Bet.*

"No iron gate, no spiked and panelled door,  
Can keep out death, the postman, or the bore."

—*A Modest Request.*

"I always thought cold victuals nice;—  
My choice would be vanilla ice."—*Contentment.*

"And with new notions—let me change the rule—  
Don't strike the iron till it's slightly cool."—*Urania.*

**9. Sportive Fancy.**—"Like his wit, humor, and pathos, this frolicsome fancy marks everything that Holmes has written. In the contributions [to the New England magazines]

of the young graduate the high spirits of a frolicsome fancy effervesce and sparkle."—*George William Curtis.*

"That song has flecked with rosy gold  
The sails that fade o'er fancy's sea."

—*William Winter.*

"It riots in his measures . . . —fancy which he tenders in lieu of imagination and power. The consecutive poems of one whose fancy plays about life as he saw it may be a feast complete and epicurean, having solid dishes and fantastic, all justly savored, cooked with discretion, flanked with honest wine, and whose cates and dainties, even, are not designed to cloy—a fancy whose glint, if not imagination, is like that of the sparks struck off from it. . . . To this day [1885] there is no telling whither a fancy, once caught and mounted, will bear this lively rider."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"His sense of the ludicrous is not keener than his sense of the beautiful; his wit and humor are but the sportive exercise of a fancy and imagination which he has abundantly exercised on serious topics."—*E. P. Whipple.*

"Out of the medley of bright thoughts and quaint satire shine gleams of brilliant fancy. His extraordinary alertness of mind enables him to expound his subject by a variety of ingenious images, to decorate it with novel suggestions, and to throw upon it many charming side-lights."—*R. E. Prothero.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

"The lady of a thousand loves,  
The darling of the old religion,  
Had only left, of all the doves  
That drew her car, one fan-tailed pigeon.

"The goddess spoke, and gently stripped  
Her bird of every caudal feather;  
A strand of gold-bright hair she clipped,  
And bound the glossy plumes together.



" And lo, the Fan ! for beauty's hand  
 The lovely queen of beauty made it ;  
 The price she named was hard to stand,  
 But Venus smiled : the Hebrew paid it."

—*The First Fan.*

" This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
 Sails the unshadowed main,—  
 The venturous bark that flings  
 On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
 In gulfs enchanted where the Siren sings,  
 And coral reefs lie bare,  
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair."

—*The Chambered Nautilus.*

" At last young April, ever frail and fair,  
 Wooed by her playmate with the golden hair,  
 Chased to the margin of receding floods  
 O'er the soft meadows starred with opening buds,  
 In tears and blushes sighs herself away,  
 And hides her cheek beneath the flowers of May."

—*Spring.*

**10. Sincerity — Honesty — Manliness.** — Although many of his victims, theological and medical, have writhed under the poet's castigations, all admit his honesty and his entire freedom from that morbidness and sentimentality that sometimes mar the work of great writers. From the critic of Holmes's first volume, who declares that "there is not a particle of humbug in him," to that reviewer, writing after the poet's death, who wishes for a list "of the men now in middle age whose mental tone has been, consciously or unconsciously, considerably influenced by the kindly castigation, until they seem intolerable of shams and half-baked pretences that otherwise they might have gone on tolerating,"—through all those fifty years the Autocrat ever spoke in what Bayard Taylor fitly calls "that freshness and heartiness of tone which springs from a fountain lower than the brain."

"He is fresh and manly even when he securely treads the scarcely-marked line which separates sentiment from sentimentality. . . . He valorously invites and courts the malicious sharpness of the most unfriendly criticism. By thus daring, provoking, and defying opposition both to his professional and literary reputation, he seems to us to indicate a real if somewhat impatient love of truth. . . . Nobody can justly appreciate Holmes who does not perceive an impersonal earnestness and insight beneath the play of his provoking personal wit. . . . Even his petulances of sarcasm are but eccentric utterances of a love of truth which has its source in the deepest and gravest sentiments of his nature."

—*E. P. Whipple.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

—"Young Doctor Green and shrewd old Doctor Gray—  
They heard the story—'Bleed!' says Doctor Green,  
'That's downright murder! cut his throat, you mean!  
Leeches! the reptiles! Why, for pity's sake,  
Not try an adder or a rattlesnake?  
Blisters! Why, bless you, they're against the law!  
It's rank assault and battery if they draw!  
. . . . .  
The portal system! What's the man about?  
Unload your nonsense! Calomel's played out!"—

—*Rip Van Winkle, M.D.*

"I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old English cheer;  
I tell you, 't was a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here;

"'T is but the fool that loves excess; hast thou a drunken soul?  
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl!"

—*On Lending a Punch Bowl.*

"Yet, true to our course, though the shadows grow dark,  
We'll trim our broad sail as before,  
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,  
Nor ask how we look from the shore."

—*Sun and Shadow.*

**II. Earnestness—Serious Purpose.**—Those who estimate Oliver Wendell Holmes merely as a wit come far short of a true conception of the man and of his genius. He was by no means unaware of the risk he ran of being misconstrued by that very large and highly respectable race of critics and readers who mistake dull sobriety for wisdom, and confound wit with buffoonery. In one of his anniversary poems, written at the very beginning of his literary career, he says to the friends who have urged him to lend his song to their merriment :

“ Besides, my prospects—don't you know that people won' tem-  
ploy

A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy,  
And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,  
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root ? ”

“ Holmes is not only a ‘ funny man ’ but a great poet, great on high and noble themes, and still greater in drawing the truest poetry from the most humble, homely, and even comical subjects. . . . He possesses the power of touching the deeper chords of the heart and of calling forth tears as well as smiles. . . . The serious purpose is hardly hidden beneath the light-hearted play of any of Holmes's works. . . . Wisdom or joke, fun or retrospect, there is a purpose behind it all.”—*Edward Everett Hale.*

“ His sparkling surface scarce betrays

The tide of thought beneath it rolled—

The wisdom of the latter days

And tender memories of the old.”—*Whittier.*

“ Dr. Holmes's inevitable gayety and exhilaration have in a measure concealed the deep earnestness of the man, his love of truth, his devotion to humanity, his passion for excellence.”—*O. B. Frothingham.*

“ He is not more a wit than a philosopher. Indeed, behind all his humor is a motive of strong moral purpose. . . . He does not believe in joy and happiness at the

expense of virtue or at the expense of truth. He has been a preacher all his life of the most serious gospel of duty and fidelity. . . . More than one-half of his published verses are on serious subjects and in very earnest mood. Several of his best poems are marked by a lofty spiritual aspiration, and they touch some of the deepest sentiments in human nature."—*G. W. Cooke.*

"With Holmes the sparkles of wit are like bubbles on a strong tide of feeling."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"Though all the world thinks of Dr. Holmes as a wit, he was, in fact, a writer with very grave and serious purposes. . . . He was a man profoundly in earnest, deeply conscientious. He wrote under an ever-present sense of responsibility."—*J. T. Morse.*

#### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea."  
—*The Chambered Nautilus.*

"Lord of all life, below, above,  
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,  
Before thy ever-blazing throne  
We ask no lustre of our own.

. . . . .

"Grant us thy truth to make us free,  
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,  
Till all thy living altars claim  
One holy light, one heavenly flame!"  
—*A Sun-Day Hymn.*

"Enough of speech! the trumpet rings;  
 Be silent, patient, calm,—  
 God help them if the tempest swings  
 The pine against the palm."

—*A Voice of the Loyal North.*

✓ **12. Localism—Sectionalism.**—Few writers have been so attached to a locality and few volumes are so tinged with localism as are those of Holmes.

"He is an essential part of Boston, like the crier who becomes so identified with a court that it seems as if Justice must change her quarters when he is gone. The Boston of Holmes, distinct as his own personality, certainly must go with him."—*E. C. Stedman.*

"Dr. Holmes had the passion of local patriotism. . . . His familiar habit of mind was cordially local. His affection fastened upon his college and on his class; he loved the city of his life with the passion of the man who can be at home in only one place."—*H. E. Scudder.*

"He is a part of the past of Boston. . . . In becoming famous he did not cease to be local. It was as a Boston man that he was known."—*G. E. Woodberry.*

"Holmes is essentially a New Englander, and one of the most faithful and shrewd interpreters of New England."—*George William Curtis.*

"He is fairly Boston's laureate. . . . He believed in Boston as Johnson did in London."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"The streets of London were not more beloved by Johnson and Lamb than those of Boston have been by Holmes. . . . He has made only short swallow-flights beyond the limits of his own beloved city. If he goes to Paris, he carries Boston with him; if he goes to New York or Philadelphia, he only sighs and compares them with Boston to their disadvantage, and gets back as quick as he can to the hub of the solar system. A barnacle is not more closely identified with its rock or a pearl with its oyster than Holmes with St.

Botolph's town. All his books might be labelled 'Talks with My Neighbors,' and this very provincialism or urban patriotism forms their chief charm. He is indigenous; throws up New England sub-soil as he ploughs; his homespun characters speak the native *patois*, and the whole tone of his writings is unaffectedly Yankee."—*W. S. Kennedy*.

"Dr. Holmes was a New Englander from the central thread of his marrow to his outermost rind; he could have made himself nothing else; he knew this and accepted it, not as a limitation, but with a just pleasure and sense of power."—*J. T. Morse*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

—"Nicest place that ever was seen,—  
Colleges red and Common green,  
Sidewalks brownish, with trees between.  
Sweetest spot beneath the skies,  
When the canker worms don't rise,—  
When the dust, that sometimes flies  
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,  
In a quiet slumber lies."

—*Parson Turell's Legacy*.

"New England, we love thee; no time can erase  
From the hearts of thy children the smile on thy face.  
'T is the mother's fond look of affection and pride,  
As she gives her fair son to the arms of his bride."

—*To the New England Society*.

"And were it any spot on earth  
Save this dear home that gave him birth  
Some scores of years ago,  
He had not come to spoil your mirth  
And chill your festive glow;  
But round his baby-nest he strays,—  
With tearful eye the scene surveys,  
His heart unchanged by changing days,—  
That's what he'd have you know."

—*Old Cambridge*.

**13. Conservatism—Quaintness.**—"The distinction between his poetry and that of the new makers of society verse is that his is a survival, theirs the attempted revival, of something that has gone before. He wears the seal of 'that past Georgian day' by direct inheritance. His work is as emblematic of the past as are the stairways and hand-carvings in various houses of Cambridge. His verses have the courtesy and wit, without the pedagogy, of the knee-buckle time, and a flavor that is really their own. He has an ear for the classical forms of English verse. The conservative persistency of his muse is as notable in matter as in manner. He takes unkindly to sentimental attempts at reform. . . . Innovation savors ill to his nostril. . . . Dr. Holmes stands for the ancestral feeling as squarely as he refutes the old belief."  
—*E. C. Stedman.*

"There is a great deal in Holmes that reminds one of William Spencer, of Crabbe, Pope, Hood, and the prize poets of the English universities. . . . How closely the lyrics of Dr. Holmes resemble those of Goldsmith and Pope no careful reader needs to be told."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

"For him we can find no living prototype; to track his footsteps, we must go back as far as Pope or Dryden. . . . Lofty, poignant, graceful, grand, high of thought, and clear of word, we could fancy ourselves reading some pungent page of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' were it not for the pervading nationality."—*Mary Russell Mitford.*

"There is visible in his writings also some of that homely astuteness which seems to have died out with the polish of modern manners. . . . He has remained loyal to eighteenth century models. . . . This very conservatism in regard to models may be a guaranty of enduring fame."—*F. H. Underwood.*

"The extraordinary success which Dr. Holmes has had in adhering to an antiquated form of verse is due to its admirable fitness to be the vehicle of his mind. . . . The

conservatism observable in his poetry was characteristic of his entire nature."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"In Dr. Holmes's make up conservatism in things political and social was curiously compounded with the progressive tendency in religious thought."—*J. T. Morse*.

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I love the memory of the past—its pressed yet fragrant flowers,—  
The moss that clothes its broken walls—the ivy on its towers ;—  
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed,—my eyes grow moist and  
dim,

To think of all the vanished joys that danced around its brim."

—*On Lending a Punch Bowl*.

"Full seven score years our city's pride—

The comely Southern spire—

Has cast its shadow, and defied

The storm, the foe, the fire ;

Sad is the sight our eyes behold ;

Woe to the three-hilled town,

When through the land the tale is told—

'The brave "Old South" is down.'

—*An Appeal for the Old South Church*.

"Friends of the Muse, to you of right belong

The first staid foot-steps of my square-toed song ;

Full well I know the strong heroic line

Has lost its fashion since I made it mine ;

But there are tricks old singers will not learn,

And this grave measure still must serve my turn."

—*At a Medical Dinner*.

✓ **14. Adaptability—Occasionalism.**—While his humor resembles that of Steele and Lamb, and his wit that of Hood and Lowell, Dr. Holmes has one characteristic in which he surpasses all other writers pre-eminently. He is, of all poets,



the poet of occasion. An examination of his works reveals no less than thirty-two poems written for anniversaries of "that happy class" of 1829 at Harvard, while we find seventy-five other poems written for as many other commemorative occasions.

"The things which sharply distinguish Holmes from other poets are the lyrics and metrical essays composed for special audiences or occasions. He is our typical university poet; the minstrel of the college that bred him, and within whose liberties he has taught, jested, sung, and toasted from boyhood to what in common folk would be old age. . . . With his own growth his brilliant occasional pieces strengthened in thought, wit, and feeling. . . . How sure their author's sense of the fitness of things, his gift of adaptability to the occasion! Now, what has carried Holmes so bravely through all this if not a kind of special masterhood, an individuality, humor, touch, that we shall not see again? Thus we come, in fine, to be sensible of the distinctive gift of this poet."—*E. C. Stedman*.

"Holmes was class poet at Harvard, and he remained class poet all his life. . . . After reading a dozen or more pages of the neat Augustan couplets of Holmes's best *verse d'occasion*, you have the comfortable feeling of a man who has just dispatched a dish of hickory-nuts cracked in halves and intermingled with raisins."—*W. S. Kennedy*.

"As the poet of occasion, no one has ever surpassed him. . . . He was always apt, always happy, always had the essential lightness of touch and the right mingling of wit and sentiment."—*Henry Cabot Lodge*.

"Throughout the year [as editor of the *Atlantic*] I could count upon him for those occasional pieces in which he so easily excelled all former writers of occasional verse."—*W. D. Howells*.

"Holmes has been a great part of what he sings, at Cambridge, at the old Saturday Club, at King's Chapel. The

subject delights him, and perhaps this is why his occasional verses are uniformly so successful. To him the occasion is all that inspiration is to the less ready and versatile poet—a true gift of the muse.”—*G. E. Woodberry*.

“He, of all men, seemed to have the invention, the dash, and the native grace which give to occasional verse its natural and spontaneous air.”—*F. H. Underwood*.

“For still as comes the festal day,  
In many a temple far and near,  
The word that all have longed to say,  
The words that all are proud to hear,  
Fall from his lips with conquering sway,  
Or grave or gay.”—*William Winter*.

“We doubt whether any other poet has done so much to lift the ‘occasional’ into the classic. With the exception of some half dozen poems of Goethe’s and, perhaps, one of Campbell’s, Mr. Holmes is unrivalled in his power of flashing the light of higher thought and the fragrance of lofty sentiment upon the banquet or commemorative meeting. In fact, this is one of his native gifts, which has been so frequently and delightfully exercised that it may lead some of his readers to overlook his admirable lyrics.”—*Bayard Taylor*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“You’ll believe me, dear boys, ’tis a pleasure to rise,  
With a welcome like this in your darling old eyes;  
To meet the same smiles and to hear the same tone,  
Which have greeted me oft in the years that have flown.

“Were I gray as the grayest old rat in the wall,  
My locks would turn brown at the sight of you all;  
If my heart were as dry as the shell on the sand,  
It would fill like the goblet I hold in my hand.”

—*Our Indian Summer*.

" Adieu ! I've trod my annual track  
 How long !—let others count the miles,—  
 And peddled out my rhyming pack  
 To friends who always paid in smiles."

—*Chanson without Music.*

" *Will I come?* That is pleasant ! I beg to inquire  
 If the gun that I carry has ever missed fire ?  
 And which was the muster-roll—mention but one—  
 That missed your old comrade who carries the gun ? "

—*Once More.*

**15. Conviviality.**—Like Dickens, Holmes is sometimes fond of extolling the merits of the cup ; like Dickens again, he covets, not the physical effects, but the mental exhilaration and the good-fellowship attendant on a moderate use of wine.

" [He was] decidedly a conservative in general tendency. With all the abundant flow of hilarity in some of his class songs, he can scarcely be called jovial ; and, in spite of his having written a fine bacchanalian song, he is by nature and habit abstemious."—*F. H. Underwood.*

" Many of his youthful stanzas are in celebration of companionship and good cheer. . . . Even his ballads are raciest when brimmed with the element which most attracts their author, that of festive good-fellowship."—*E. C. Stedman.*

Dr. Holmes has clearly expressed his own position on this point in one stanza of his famous poem "On Lending a Punch Bowl : "

" I tell you there was generous warmth in good old English cheer ;

I tell you 'twas a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here ;

'Tis but the fool that loves excess—hast thou a drunken soul,

Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl."

" He has Pepys's hearty enjoyment of life—loves rowing, racing, trees, women, flowers, perfumes, and a well-furnished table."—*W. S. Kennedy.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

“Flash out a stream of blood-red wine,  
 For I would drink to other days,  
 And brighter shall their memory shine,  
 Seen flaming through its crimson blaze!  
 The roses die, the summers fade,  
 But every ghost of boyhood’s dream  
 By nature’s magic power is laid  
 To sleep beneath this blood-red stream!”

—*Mare Rubrum.*

“This ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times,  
 Of joyous days, and jolly nights, and merry Christmas  
 chimes;  
 They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,  
 That dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was  
 new.”—*On Lending a Punch Bowl.*

“And yet, among my native shades, beside my nursing-mother,  
 Where every stranger seems a friend, and every friend a  
 brother,  
 I feel the old convivial glow (unaided) o’er me stealing,—  
 The warm, champagne, old-particular, brandy-punchy feeling.”  
 —*Nux Postcoenatica.*

**16. Power of Portraiture.**—Holmes has shown himself a master in those single touches which, like the single strokes of the painter, cause a figure to stand out before us in bold relief.

“He has few superiors in discernment of a man’s individuality, however distinct that individuality may be from his own. . . . I do not recall a more faithful and graphic *outside* portrait [essay on Emerson]. True, it was done by an artist who applies the actual eye, used for actual vision, to the elusive side of things, and who thinks little too immaterial

for the test of reason and science. . . . But it sets Emerson before us in both his noon-day and sun-down moods ; in his character as a town-dweller and also as when he ' looked upon this earth as a visitor from another planet would look on it. ' '—*E. C. Stedman*.

"[In "Before the Curfew"] he sketches for us portraits of Longfellow, Agassiz, Emerson, and Hawthorne which may well be placed beside any that have been drawn of these favorites of New England's literary age. . . . [In his "Vignettes," the portraits of Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Moore, Dickens, Burns, etc.] his lines take hold of us like the grasp of a friendly hand."—*G. E. Woodberry*.

"Certain types of New England characters are sketched in coarse raw pigment with great fidelity, but when the author is depicting his subordinate and ruder personages, you generally receive the impression of grotesque exaggeration and caricature. . . . He has an irresistible tendency to indulge in a kind of horse-play, a coarse realism of portraiture, to a great extent lacking in the subtle and delicate touch by which the great novelists reveal the hidden springs of feeling and nobleness, even in their least prominent characters."—*W. S. Kennedy*.

## ILLUSTRATIONS.

" By the white neck-cloth, with its straightened tie,  
The sober hat, the Sabbath-speaking eye,  
Severe and smileless, he that runs may read  
The stern disciple of Geneva's creed.

. . . . .

A livelier bearing of the outward man,  
The light-hued gloves, the undevout rattan,  
Now smartly raised or half profanely twirled,  
A bright, fresh twinkle from the week-day world,  
Tell their plain story ; yes, thine eyes behold  
A cheerful Christian from the liberal fold."—*Urania*.

" Ah, gentlest soul ! how gracious, how benign  
Breathes through our troubled life that voice of thine !  
Filled with a sweetness born of happier spheres,  
That wins and warms, that kindles, softens, cheers,  
That calms the wildest woe and stays the bitterest tears."  
—*To Longfellow.*

" The lark of Scotia's morning sky !  
Whose voice may sing his praises ?  
With Heaven's own sunlight in his eye,  
He walked among the daisies,  
Till through the cloud of fortune's wrong  
He soared to fields of glory ;  
But left his land her sweetest song  
And earth her saddest story."—*On Burns.*



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